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# STARS AND STRIPES®

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Volume 77, No. 76 ©SS 2018

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 1, 2018

平成30年4月5日 第三種郵便物認可 日刊(土日除く)  
発行所 星条旗新聞社 〒106-0032 東京都港区六本木7丁目23番17号 定価 ¥50

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Afghan soldiers prepare to  
enter a building during an  
exercise at Camp Shorabak,  
northwest of Lashkar  
Gah in Helmand province,  
Afghanistan, last month.

LUKE HOOGENAM  
Courtesy of the U.S. Marine Corps



## AT AN IMPASSE

Report: Afghan forces prevent Taliban  
from capturing territory but struggle  
to extend their own area of control

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Courtesy of Alejandra Juarez

Alejandra Juarez and her husband, Sgt. Cuauhtemoc "Temo" Juarez, an Iraq War veteran, pose for a photo in April.

## Wife of Iraq War vet faces deportation Friday

By DIANNA CAHN  
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — She thought the hard days were behind her. Her rough childhood in Mexico after her father died and her family fell apart. The terrifying trips with a coyote across the border — twice because she was captured and sent back the first time. The deployment of her husband — a former Marine turned National Guardsman — to the war in Iraq, leaving the young mother alone to care for their first child.

But nothing compares to the threat looming over her and her family now.

After two decades of building a life here, Alejandra Juarez, 39, is set to be deported from her home in Davenport, Fla., back to Mexico on Friday, tearing her family apart.

As the wife of a combat veteran, she never imagined

this day would come.

She and her husband, Sgt. Cuauhtemoc "Temo" Juarez — who came to the U.S. from Mexico as a child and naturalized just days before his Iraq deployment — always expected that one day, in recognition of his service, she too would be naturalized.

But she broke the law 20 years ago when she came into the country, and no lawyer has ever been able to make that right. Under the more stringent immigration policies of President Donald Trump, her status now makes her a target for deportation.

The couple have met with lawyers, have a bill in her name pending in Congress, appealed to immigration officials and pleaded in vain to be heard by a judge. Now, all they can do is prepare their family for the worst and hope for a miracle.

SEE JUAREZ ON PAGE 8

# PACIFIC

# Army resort workers face uncertain future

By MARCUS FICHTL  
Stars and Stripes

**POHAKULOA TRAINING AREA, Hawaii** — A hundred Army civilian employees whose jobs have been affected by the Kilauea volcano eruption face an uncertain future. Since May, staffers at Kilauea Military Camp — an Army recreation facility at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park — have been working at Pohakuloa Training Area. Each day, about three dozen of the workers ride a free bus to the site to work rotating shifts.

The workers technically have been on administrative leave since May 11, and legally they could have been furloughed and not paid for the past two months, said camp director Randy Hart.

So far the Army has tapped \$600,000 in camp revenue and other installation funding to keep paying the workers. Insurance should allow the service to keep the paychecks coming for a while longer, Hart said.

"Nothing is forever, but right now there isn't a deadline date like if you're not back to work by 1 October that's it," he said.

The employees' resort-style Hawaiian shirts stand out at the training area among the Korean War-era Quonset huts and servicemembers in dirt-drenched fatigues. Housekeepers clean up Pohakuloa's gymnasiums while maintenance workers refurbish a building so troops can practice hand-to-hand combat.

The paychecks seem like a lifesaver to Maureen Quinn, 63, who has been a housekeeper at Kilauea Military Camp for 18 years.

"I got down on my knees and said, 'Thank you!' she said.

"A lot of us are old ladies like me. We're getting to the end. No one

wants us anymore."

At first, staff thought that they could ride the eruption out, said Quinn, who has experienced many eruptions over the years.

"We first thought it was nothing," she said. "Then it kept getting worse and worse."

Hart recalled a harrowing week for his staff when the eruption happened.

"It happened very, very quickly," he said.

On May 3, Kilauea erupted at nearby Leilani Estates. No major eruptions happened at Volcano National Park, but the lava levels began hitting the water table, causing explosions.

Park staff informed Hart on May 10 that they'd be closing the next day and he'd need to evacuate his employees and 200 guests.

"By 2 o'clock in the morning of May 11 we had everyone out," he said. Within weeks the workers were relocated to the training area.

Now deserted, Kilauea Military Camp has received almost no damage so far from the eruption, Hart said.

The "Yes ma'am's" and friendliness of the troops rotating through the training area is boosting the resort workers' morale, but Quinn said they're worried about job security following a recent report by the U.S. Geological Survey.

"The volume of lava erupted during the current activity exceeds that of many past eruptions ... it is most likely that the lower East Rift Zone eruption may continue for months to years," the report said.

"It's scary; we don't know what's going to happen," Quinn said.

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Above: Members of the Kilauea Military Camp housekeeping staff pose at Pohakuloa Training Area, Hawaii, on July 19.



Left: A U.S. Geological Survey vehicle drives away from a lava flow at Leilani Estates, Hawaii, on July 17.

PHOTOS BY MARCUS FICHTL  
Stars and Stripes

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## PACIFIC

# US spies: N. Korea constructing missiles

By ELLEN NAKASHIMA  
AND JOBY WARRICK  
The Washington Post

U.S. spy agencies are seeing signs that North Korea is constructing new missiles at a factory that produced the country's first intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of reaching the United States, according to officials familiar with the intelligence.

Newly obtained evidence, including satellite photos taken in recent weeks, indicates that work is underway on at least one and possibly two liquid-fueled ICBMs at a large research facility in Sanumdong, on the outskirts of Pyongyang, according to the officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe classified intelligence.

The findings are the latest to show ongoing activity inside North Korea's nuclear and missile facilities at a time when the country's leaders are engaged in arms talks with the United States. The new intelligence does not suggest an expansion of North Korea's capabilities but shows that work on advanced weapons is continuing weeks after President Donald Trump declared in a Twitter posting that Pyongyang was "no longer a Nuclear Threat."

The reports about new missile construction came after recent revelations about a suspected uranium enrichment facility, called Kangsan, that North Korea is operating in secret. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo acknowledged during Senate testimony last week that North Korean facto-



Google satellite image

North Korea's Sanumdong missile assembly facility is seen south of Pyongyang.

ries "continue to produce fissile material" used in making nuclear weapons. He declined to say whether Pyongyang is building new missiles.

During a summit with Trump in June, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un agreed

to a vaguely worded pledge to "work toward" the "denuclearization" of the Korean Peninsula. But since then, North Korea has made few tangible moves signaling an intention to disarm.

Instead, senior North Korean officials

have discussed their intention to deceive Washington about the number of nuclear warheads and missiles they have, as well as the types and numbers of facilities, and to rebuff international inspectors, according to intelligence gathered by U.S. agencies. Their strategy includes potentially asserting that they have fully denuclearized by declaring and disposing of 20 warheads while retaining dozens more.

The Sanumdong factory has produced two of North Korea's ICBMs, including the powerful Hwasong-15, the first with a proven range that could allow it to strike the U.S. East Coast. The newly obtained evidence points to ongoing work on at least one Hwasong-15 at the Sanumdong plant, according to imagery collected by the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency in recent weeks.

"We see them going to work, just as before," said one U.S. official, who, like the others, spoke on the condition of anonymity in discussing sensitive intelligence. The exception, the officials said, is the Sohae Satellite Launching Station on North Korea's west coast, where workers can be observed dismantling an engine test stand, honoring a promise made to Trump at the summit.

Many analysts and independent experts see that dismantling as largely symbolic since North Korea has now successfully launched ICBMs that use the kind of liquid-fueled engines tested at Sohae. Moreover, the test stand could easily be rebuilt within months.

## Japan saw deadly July weather

By KEN MORITSUGU  
Associated Press

TOKYO — More than 300 people died in July from weather-related disasters in one of Japan's deadliest months in recent years.

First came record rainfall. Disaster authorities say at least 220 people were killed early in the month by severe flooding and landslides in western Japan, with nine more still missing and presumed dead.

That was followed by record temperatures topping 104 degrees Fahrenheit. The heat has been blamed for 116 deaths.

The toll was high, even for a country prone to earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and typhoons. One of the wealthiest nations in the world, Japan has used its technological prowess to build substantial defenses against natural disasters. Rivers are lined with tall walls and man-made embankments to keep them from overflowing. Skyscrapers, built on shock-absorbing systems, are designed to sway in an earthquake instead of toppling.

A big-enough disaster, though, overwhelms the defenses.

Western Japan saw historic rainfall at the end of the first week of July. Warm and humid air from the Pacific Ocean intensified a seasonal rain front, triggering



HARUKA NUGA/AP

Emergency teams stand alongside structural damage caused by heavy rains in Hiroshima, Japan, July 9.

torrential downpours, the Japan Meteorological Agency said. What was left of a typhoon earlier in the week added to water levels.

The death toll was the largest from a major storm since 1982, according to the Nippon.com website.

About half the victims were in Hiroshima prefecture, where the more than 100 deaths exceeded the 77 killed by landslides in the same state in 2014. Also hard-hit was neighboring Okayama prefecture, where a river embankment collapsed in Kurashiki city, submerging neighborhoods in one-story high floodwaters.

More than 70,000 troops and emergency workers were dispatched to distribute supplies and dig through debris to search for the missing. As of Sunday, more than 10,000 people remained in evacuation centers, unable to return home. Workers and volun-

teers who descended on the region to help clean up and rebuild soon faced another risk: heatstroke.

One measure of the heat is the number of people taken to hospitals by ambulance with heatstroke symptoms. That figure more than tripled to nearly 10,000 in the second week of July and topped 22,000 in the third week before falling back to a still high 13,700 last week, the Fire and Disaster Management Agency said Tuesday.

The mercury hit 106 degrees Fahrenheit on July 23 in Kumagaya, a city about 40 miles northwest of Tokyo, the highest ever recorded in Japan. The temperature reached 102 F the same day in central Tokyo.

Two lingering high-pressure systems trapped warm and humid air above the region, bringing record temperatures for about two weeks.

## Rival Korea's' generals end talks with no agreement

By HYUNG-JIN KIM  
Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — Rare general-level talks between the two Koreas ended with no agreement Tuesday, but the top delegates said they had a meaningful discussion on easing their countries' decadeslong military standoff.

Experts said it was still unclear whether the rivals can reach any breakthrough agreement on reducing tensions in the near future because South Korea, in close consultations with the United States, must link any expansion of ties to progress in North Korea's nuclear disarmament. Earlier Tuesday, South Korea's state media accused North Korea of being reluctant to take full-fledged steps toward reconciliation because it's "reading another's face," an apparent reference to the United States.

"We hope that the South Korean authorities will come to their senses, though belatedly, and roll up their sleeves to improve inter-Korean relations," the North's Rodong Sinmun newspaper said in a commentary.

Tuesday's meeting at the Koreas' shared border village of Panmunjom was the second such high-level military contact since the two countries' leaders held a landmark summit in April and pledged to reduce the danger of another war on the peninsula.

The chief South Korean delegate, Maj. Gen. Kim Do Gyun, said

the Koreans had a common view in principle on dismantling a jointly controlled area at Panmunjom, removing some guard posts from the Demilitarized Zone that bisects the countries, halting hostile acts along their disputed sea boundary and conducting joint searches for soldiers missing from the 1950-53 Korean War in DMZ areas. He said the Koreans will continue talks on details of the issues.

Kim described Tuesday's talks as "sincere" and "candid," saying he believes the two militaries could contribute to establishing a lasting peace between the countries. His North Korean counterpart, Lt. Gen. An Ik San, said the talks were "productive" and that he also believes many pending military issues can be resolved.

During the April summit and a June meeting with President Donald Trump, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un expressed his commitment to the "complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula." But there have been concerns that North Korea hasn't taken any serious disarmament measures since then.

On Friday, North Korea released what were said to be dozens of remains of American soldiers missing from the 1950-53 Korean War, something Kim promised during his summit with Trump. Trump thanked him for "fulfilling a promise" to send back U.S. remains and said it was a step in the right direction following their summit.

## WAR ON TERRORISM

# SIGAR sees stalemate in Afghan fighting

## Report also cites loss of personnel

By PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN  
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Afghan security forces are fighting Taliban insurgents to a stalemate, a U.S. government watchdog said in a new report.

The Afghan government controlled or influenced about 56 percent of the country's 407 districts as of May 15, the same number as last quarter. Meanwhile, insurgents lost control or influence in three districts.

The figures, provided by U.S. Forces-Afghanistan, were in a report issued late Monday by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, or SIGAR. It also said the number of people living under government and insurgent control remained the same over the last quarter despite an intense aerial campaign by U.S. and Afghan forces.

The government in Kabul aims to win control or influence territory where 80 percent of the country's population lives by the end of next year. As of mid-May, 65 percent of Afghans lived in such areas, SIGAR said.

The report also highlighted continuing manning shortfalls in the government's security forces.

"According to Afghan-reported force-strength data, [Afghan



LUKE HOOGENDAM/Courtesy of the U.S. Marine Corps

**Afghan soldiers move as a squad during training at Camp Shorabak in June. The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction says the country's forces are preventing the Taliban from capturing more territory but are finding it difficult to extend their own area of control.**

forces] may have increased in size since last quarter to 314,242 personnel, but the force has lost 8,500 personnel since April 2017, and 5,353 since April 2016," SIGAR said, adding that Afghan forces were only 89.3 percent of their goal strength.

Congress created SIGAR in 2008 to provide independent oversight of U.S.-funded recon-

struction efforts in Afghanistan. Since 2002, Washington has appropriated roughly \$126 billion for relief and reconstruction in the country, most of which has been spent on security.

SIGAR reiterated its call for certain data to be declassified to help better gauge the success of U.S. efforts in the country.

Casualty figures and exact

attrition rates among Afghan troops and police, as well as data on the state of their equipment, are being withheld from the public, SIGAR said.

The number of targets associated with Taliban financing and an assessment of revenue denied to the insurgency because of U.S. airstrikes is also being kept secret, SIGAR said.

Under the Trump administration's South Asia strategy, the U.S. has intensified airstrikes, dropping almost 3,000 munitions over the country during the first half of 2018 — a higher number for that period than during the surge of 2010, when about 100,000 American troops were in Afghanistan.

Under new rules, the U.S. has been targeting drug labs used by the Taliban to generate revenue. U.S. military officials say the ongoing strikes have cost the Taliban \$220 million.

SIGAR, however, has questioned that figure and whether the drug lab attacks — which have included American B-52 and F-22 aircraft and Afghan A-29s, as well as artillery rocket systems — would have any lasting impact.

"Operating these aircraft costs anywhere from \$9,798 per hour for an F/A-18 to \$35,294 per hour for an F-22 ... destroyed labs, on the other hand, are quickly and easily replaced with minimal cost."

Washington's aim is to push the Taliban to the negotiating table and bring an end to America's longest war, now in its 17th year.

Despite the statistics published by SIGAR, Gen. John Nicholson, the U.S. top commander in Afghanistan, said last week that recent steps toward peace prove the U.S. strategy is working.

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## Georgian soldiers are Bagram theft suspects

By PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN  
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — A group of Georgian soldiers is suspected of stealing about \$3,600 worth of merchandise from a shop at Bagram Air Field, military officials said Tuesday.

The investigation was launched after a recent heist at an Army and Air Force Exchange Service store on Bagram, the largest base in Afghanistan. It hasn't been revealed what the stolen merchandise was.

U.S. military investigators found "probable cause" of the Georgians' involvement, said Lt. Col. Martin O'Donnell, a spokesman for U.S. Forces-Afghanistan.

Their findings have since been given to the senior Georgian military representative at the base, to be passed on to Georgia's Defense Ministry for review, O'Donnell said.

Four Georgian servicemembers are suspected of stealing from the shop, the ministry said Sunday in a statement which expressed embarrassment over the alleged incident.

"The actions of individual military personnel" aren't represen-



BOB HARRISON/Courtesy of U.S. Forces-Afghanistan

**The Bagram Air Field Exchange store in Afghanistan is shown in 2016.**

tative of the overall peacekeeping contingent, the statement said.

Although Georgia is not a member of NATO, it is the fourth-largest troop contributor to the alliance's mission in Afghanistan, with 870 soldiers. Georgian soldiers focus on security and rapid reaction force operations. They are stationed in Bagram, Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif.

Since Georgia joined the coalition in 2004, 29 of its soldiers have died in Afghanistan, according to [icasualties.org](http://icasualties.org), which tracks deaths in the war.

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## Turkish court rejects US pastor's appeal

ANKARA, Turkey — Turkey's state-run media says a court has rejected an American pastor's appeal for his release from house arrest and refused to lift his travel ban.

Anadolu Agency says the court in Izmir, western Turkey, on Tuesday reviewed an appeal lodged by Andrew Brunson's lawyer but ruled that there was no change in the "strong criminal suspicion" against him.

The evangelical pastor was arrested in December 2016 and jailed until he was released to home detention last week. He faces up to 35 years in prison if convicted of "committing crimes on behalf of terror groups without being a member" and espionage.

Last week, President Donald Trump announced possible sanc-

tions against Turkey for its treatment of Brunson.

Brunson's lawyer Ismail Cem Halavut could not immediately be contacted for comment.

## ISIS claims attack on tourists in Tajikistan

MOSCOW — Islamic State has claimed responsibility for a weekend attack on Western tourists in Tajikistan that left four people from the U.S. and Europe killed.

The group said in a statement late Monday that several of its soldiers attacked the "citizens of the Crusader coalition," referring to an incident Sunday in which a car rammed into a group of foreign cyclists south of the Tajik capital Dushanbe. The driver and the passengers then got out and attacked the tourists with knives, leaving four dead and three injured.

ISIS often refers to the U.S.-led coalition that is fighting it in Syria and Iraq as crusaders.

Authorities in the ex-Soviet Central Asian nation had called the incident an "attack" and said terrorism was a possible motive.

Two of the victims were American, one was Swiss and another was from the Netherlands, foreign and Tajik officials said. The injured include a woman from Switzerland.

There were conflicting reports about how many suspects have been killed as police tried to detain them, and how many have been arrested.

ISIS' statement did not say how many militants took part in the attack.

There was no immediate reaction to the ISIS claim from Dushanbe on Tuesday.

From The Associated Press

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# WAR ON TERRORISM



VAHID SALEMI/AP

An Iranian street money exchanger holds a 50 euro banknote in downtown Tehran, Iran, on Monday, Iran's currency has dropped to a record low ahead of the imposition of renewed American sanctions.

## Iranians wary of talks with Trump

By AMIR VAHDAT  
Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iranian officials reacted skeptically on Tuesday to President Donald Trump's comments that he's willing to negotiate with his Iranian counterpart, saying instead that if Trump wants talks, he needs to reject the international nuclear deal he unilaterally pulled out of earlier this year.

Trump on Monday said he'd meet with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani "anytime" if the Iranian leader were willing.

In his first public remarks after the comment, Rouhani did not mention Trump at all but instead stressed the need for the other nations involved in the nuclear deal to forge ahead with their pledges of trying to salvage it.

"Today we are at a very critical point in history regarding the nuclear deal, and Europe's transparent measures to compensate for the United States' unlawful withdrawal from it are very important for the Iranian nation," Rouhani said after talks with new British Ambassador Rob Macaire.

In addition to Britain, China, Germany, France, Russia and the European Union are negotiating with Iran on preserving the deal.

The Iranian leadership has previously ruled out one-on-one talks with Trump following his decision to pull the United States out of the deal under which Iran was given relief from sanctions in return for curbs on its nuclear program.

Iran's semi-official ISNA news agency quoted political adviser Hamid Aboutealebi as saying that for talks to happen, the U.S. needs to rejoin the deal.

"Those who believe in dialogue as a method of resolving disputes in civilized societies should be committed to the means," he said.

Trump withdrew from the landmark nuclear accord in May, saying it was too generous to Iran. He has vowed to ramp up sanctions until Iran radically changes

its regional policies, including its support for regional militant groups, something the country's leaders have long refused to do.

Even though Trump on Monday said if Rouhani were to meet with him there would be "no preconditions," he also did not walk back from any of those earlier demands.

With the first U.S. sanctions due to come into effect Monday, the economy in Iran has already been hit, giving rise to growing fears of prolonged economic suffering. Another round, covering other types of commerce, including oil purchases, goes into effect Nov. 4.

Rouhani on Tuesday again suggested Iran could cause major disruptions in the Gulf region by attempting to block key shipping lanes, saying, "Iran has never sought tensions in the region and does not want there to be any problem for the world's waterways, but it will never let go of its right to export oil," the semi-official Mehr news agency reported.

With the U.S. sanctions looming, the Iranian currency has been in freefall, hitting a new low Monday, at 122,000 rial to the dollar on the thriving black market. It recovered slightly to 115,000 to the dollar on Tuesday, and concerns are growing as Iranians have seen their savings dwindle and purchasing power drop.

Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh, the head of an influential parliamentary committee on national security and foreign policy, suggested a U.S. return to the nuclear deal, which would bring an end to the economic uncertainty, would be needed before Tehran could think of negotiating.

"There can be no negotiations with the Americans raising the issue of talks from the position of power," he was quoted as saying on the website of the Iranian parliament, calling Trump's decision to pull out of the nuclear deal the "biggest blow to diplomacy."

# Afghan bus bombing kills 17

By RAHIM FAIEZ  
Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — A roadside bombing hit a passenger bus in western Afghanistan on Tuesday, killing at least 17 people, as militants launched a coordinated attack on a city in the country's east where initial reports said four people were killed, according to officials.

The morning attack in western Farah province took place in the Bala Buluk district and also wounded 31 people, all civilians, according to Abdul Jabar Shahiq, the provincial health department chief.

The bus was on its way from Herat province toward the capital, Kabul, when it hit the roadside bomb, Shahiq said, adding that women and children were among the casualties.

Details were slowly emerging on the attack in eastern Afghanistan, where militants launched a coordinated assault in the city of Jalalabad, the Nangarhar provincial capital, local officials said.

Initial reports said four people were killed and at least eight were wounded, including two policemen.

The militants targeted the Jalalabad government building of the refugee and negotiation department, according to Gen. Ghulam Sanayee Stanikzai, the provincial police chief.

Stanikzai and Gov. Hayatullah Hayat said Afghan forces killed two militants during the battle.

Zabihullah Zemarai, a member of the provincial council, said the



AP

Smoke rises from a building after a deadly attack Tuesday including a suspected suicide car bombing in Jalalabad, Afghanistan.

attack started with a car bombing — likely an explosion set off by a suicide car bomber — near the city's provincial hospital and health department, followed by gunfire.

Afghan forces reacted quickly and rescued all participants of a meeting of nongovernmental organizations that was taking place in the nearby building as well as the head of the refugee department, said Attahullah Khogyani, Hayat's spokesman.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attacks. In Nangarhar, both the Taliban insurgents and Islamic State have been active.

The Taliban also have a strong presence in Farah, especially in Bala Buluk where they often plant roadside bombs to target govern-

ment officials or Afghan security forces. Such attacks often end up inflicting significant casualties among civilians.

Farah has seen heavy fighting in recent months, with local officials and tribal elders requesting additional government forces to support the overburdened army and police. In May, more than 300 Taliban launched a multi-pronged attack on the city of Farah, the provincial capital, before they were repelled. At least 25 government troops were killed in the fighting.

In another development Tuesday, ISIS claimed responsibility for Monday's attack in Nangarhar when a suicide car bomber killed tribal leader Haji Hayat Khan, the commander of a local militia battling both the Taliban and ISIS militants, and three others.

## Syrian government forces, ISIS fail to reach deal on prisoners

Associated Press

BEIRUT — Negotiations between Syrian government forces and Islamic State for an exchange of prisoners in southern Syria failed to reach an agreement after ISIS imposed new conditions, activists said Tuesday.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the talks were meant to lead to a deal under which ISIS would release captive civilians — about 30 women and children abducted last week during fighting in the southern province of Sweida.

In return, the government was to free 150 captured ISIS fighters and open a corridor for 100 besieged ISIS-linked fighters to

leave the area of the fighting.

The Observatory said that instead, government forces resumed airstrikes on Tuesday, targeting some of the besieged ISIS-linked fighters near the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

The Sweida 24, an activist collective, said the talks collapsed after ISIS put new conditions, including withdrawal of Syrian troops from Sweida and a commitment by the province's residents not to take part in any attacks on ISIS in the future.

The collective also listed the names of the 30 civilians abducted last Wednesday, when a wave of ISIS attacks in Sweida and the provincial capital killed more than 200 people.



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## NATION

# Facebook uncovers disinformation operation

BY ELIZABETH DWOSKIN  
AND TONY ROMM  
The Washington Post

Facebook said Tuesday that it had discovered a sophisticated coordinated disinformation operation on its platform involving 32 false pages and profiles engaging in divisive messaging ahead of the U.S. midterm elections.

The social media company said that it couldn't tie the activity to Russia, which interfered on its platform around the 2016 presidential election. But Facebook said the profiles shared a pattern of behavior with the previous Russian disinformation campaign, which was led by a group called the Internet Research Agency.

Facebook briefed congressional aides. A congressional aide said there's no evidence that political candidates were targeted in the new disinformation effort, but that pages and accounts sought to spread politically divisive content around social issues. "It's clear that whoever set up these accounts went to much greater lengths to obscure their true identities than the Russian-based Internet Research Agency (IRA) has in the past," Facebook said in a post. "We believe this could be partly due to changes we've made over the last year to make this kind of abuse much harder. But security is not something that's ever done. We face determined, well-funded adversaries who will never give up and are constantly changing tactics. It's an arms race

and we need to constantly improve too."

In particular, the pages promoted an event pegged as a counter-rally to a far-right march scheduled for next weekend in Washington.

Facebook said that the urgency of the upcoming rally prompted them to publicize the information, even though it is in the early stages of an investigation.

The company, which identified the pages two weeks ago and has since removed them, said in June that it had found no such activity.

The 32 pages found had up to 18,000 followers. There was no specific evidence that political candidates were targeted, but one account followed an IRA-associated account for a brief period of time.

"Today's disclosure is further evidence that the Kremlin continues to exploit platforms like Facebook to sow division and spread disinformation, and I am glad that Facebook is taking some steps to pinpoint and address this activity," said Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va. "I also expect Facebook, along with other platform companies, will continue to identify Russian troll activity and to work with Congress on updating our laws to better protect our democracy in the future."

In the run-up to 2016 election, Russian operatives spread false messages using hundreds of accounts. Those messages went viral, reaching more than 100 million Americans.

## Kelly to remain as chief of staff

BY CATHERINE LUCEY  
AND ZEKE MILLER  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Embattled White House Chief of Staff John Kelly has told senior aides that President Donald Trump asked him to stay in his role through 2020.

Kelly told staffers that he had agreed to stay on, five White House officials said Tuesday. The public show of confidence in Kelly, aimed if later reversed, appeared aimed at tamping down speculation about staff turnover, as well as projecting calm as the president gears up for his re-election campaign.

The officials were not authorized to speak publicly about pri-

vate conversations.

Kelly hit the one-year mark as Trump's chief of staff Monday. Speculation about his exit has flared for months amid reports that Trump had cooled on the retired four-star general. Kelly is credited with bringing order to the West Wing but also grates on the free-wheeling president.

Still, Trump is known as a mercurial boss, whose feelings on key staffers can shift rapidly. Trump on Monday tweeted congratulations to Kelly on reaching the one-year milestone.

"Congratulations to General John Kelly. Today we celebrate his first full year as (at)WhiteHouse Chief of Staff!" Trump wrote.

Speculation about Kelly's exit hit a fever pitch about a month

ago, with Trump openly weighing possible replacements. At the time, Kelly made clear to confidants that he had no plans to leave, though he had also told people close to him that he'd be happy if he made it to the one-year mark.

Kelly has often joked publicly about how working for Trump is the hardest job he's ever had, including those on the battlefield.

Trump has grown increasingly frustrated with news reports about staff turnover and discord, often dubbing it "fake news," though there has been a historic level of turnover during his first two years in office. The White House has struggled to recruit top talent across the administration to replace departing staffers.



Haeder Al Anbiki holds his citizenship certificate during a naturalization ceremony in Orlando, Fla., on Tuesday.

MIKE SCHNEIDER/AP

## Ex-translator now US citizen

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — As he waited for his citizenship ceremony on Tuesday, Haeder Al Anbiki held his breath, half-worried that someone would stop him and tell him he couldn't participate.

That's what happened last year to the former Iraqi translator for U.S. troops.

But everything went smoothly at his ceremony Tuesday in Orlando, Fla. He recited the Pledge of Allegiance, said the oath of

citizenship and sang along to Lee Greenwood's "God Bless the USA."

Al Anbiki had filed a lawsuit after he was pulled from the ceremony last year. He claimed authorities were applying a different set of rules under a program that opponents say targets applicants from majority-Muslim countries.

He credited publicity about his situation for the government's reversal in his case.

He calls becoming a citizen "a dream come true."

## Man who posed as general sentenced

By JOSH SHAFFER

The (Raleigh, N.C.) News & Observer

RALEIGH, N.C. — Christian Desgroux, the Raleigh auto mechanic who posed as a U.S. Army general and piloted a helicopter to the SAS campus in Cary to impress a woman, received a six-month sentence in federal prison Tuesday.

When he later interviewed the employee, Bell testified, she said she assumed Desgroux, then 57, was trying to impress her and start a romantic relationship. "She said they did nothing," Bell said in February. "They flew around for 30 minutes. She had no idea he was flying a helicopter to pick her up."

Bell testified that Desgroux had chartered the helicopter out of Charlotte and told her he had authorization to land at SAS. When it touched down on the software company's soccer field, Bell said, Desgroux immediately jumped out wearing a uniform and combat patches and three stars, though he had never served in the U.S. Army.

"He saluted the security officers," Bell said. "They actually saluted him back." The woman later told Bell that

up a female employee on orders of President Donald Trump.

While at the SAS campus in Cary, Desgroux told security officers that he had come to take the woman to a classified meeting at Fort Bragg, then flew away with her for approximately 30 minutes before returning to Cary, agent Tony Bell said.

When he later interviewed the employee, Bell testified, she said she assumed Desgroux, then 57, was trying to impress her and start a romantic relationship.

"She said they did nothing," Bell said in February. "They flew around for 30 minutes. She had no idea he was flying a helicopter to pick her up."

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"He saluted the security officers," Bell said. "They actually saluted him back."

The woman later told Bell that

she had known Desgroux for about 20 years. She knew he was coming to SAS that day but expected him to come by car. They were planning to meet an attorney, Bell said, apparently to seek a patent about a prototype Desgroux had been developing.

But the woman told Bell that Desgroux had been having marital problems and must have assumed she had similar issues because she and her husband live apart.

Bell interviewed the pilot, who said he and Desgroux flew to Durham to refuel after dropping the employee back at SAS. Desgroux told the pilot that he wanted to take a future trip to the Pentagon, Bell said.

Their flight to SAS was the second Desgroux had chartered. Earlier in 2017, Desgroux chartered a helicopter to Jacksonville — again wearing an Army uniform — and had the pilot land at a KOA Kampground so he could meet briefly with a woman there. On that trip, Bell said, Desgroux stated his desire to land a helicopter on an aircraft carrier in Norfolk.

He also described himself as a pilot who had down Apache helicopters during the Gulf War.

Stars and Stripes

The Air Force is considering an extension on the amount of time staff sergeants can serve in their rank before being forced to retire, the service's top enlisted leader said.

Chief Master Sgt. Kaeth O. Wright said the service is examining the merits of allowing staff sergeants to extend their time from 15 to 20 years during a recent town hall meeting at Spangdahlem Air Base.

"We like to do a little bit of data analysis; we want to make sure we do the correct research; we want to make sure we understand the second- and third-order effects before we pull the trigger,"

Wright said.

Wright's comments, first reported by Military.com, came from a video posted on the Facebook page Air Force Arm/No/Inco.

During the Friday town hall meeting, Wright said extending the amount of time airmen can serve in grade could help with retention and that the idea could eventually be expanded to include technical sergeants, which would allow them to serve up to 22 years instead of 20.

Wright said an area of concern was that extensions could create a potential promotional logjam. But Wright said he thought the effects on promotions would be minimal.

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Desgroux

## NATION

# Wilkie is officially in at VA

By NIKKI WENTLING  
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Robert Wilkie officially took over Monday as secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs during a swearing-in ceremony with President Donald Trump at the White House.

Wilkie, a former military officer and Pentagon official, was joined in the Oval Office by his wife, Julie, and son, Adam, as well as former bosses Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis. Vice President Mike Pence administered the oath.

"I'm humbled by the prospect of serving those who have borne the battle, those American men and women who have sacrificed so much," Wilkie, 55, said in remarks before the ceremony. "I look forward to this great adventure."

Wilkie is now in charge of the second-largest federal agency with more than 360,000 employees and an annual budget of nearly \$200 billion. The department is tasked with providing health care, monetary assistance and other benefits to millions of veterans.

Since the VA became a Cabinet-level department in 1989, there have now been 10 secretaries and five acting secretaries. Trump described the position as "very, very tough and important."

"I know you'll work night and day to fulfill our sacred duty to protect those who day to full," Trump said Monday. "It's a tough job, but a beautiful job. Congratulations."

Wilkie is taking over during a time of immense change at the VA. He'll be tasked with leading an overhaul of the VA's private-sector care programs and overseeing a multibillion-dollar project to create a new electronic health record system, as well as implementing recently approved changes to the VA claims appeals process, caregiver benefits and the GI Bill, among other things.



ANDREW HARNIK/AP

**Vice President Mike Pence applauds as President Donald Trump congratulates new Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert Wilkie and his wife, Julia, following a ceremony at the White House on Monday.**

Lawmakers and veterans organizations hope Wilkie can stabilize the department after months of uncertainty about its leadership.

"We congratulate him on becoming secretary, and we look forward to him bringing stable leadership to the department and strong advocacy for America's veterans," Veterans of Foreign Wars Commander B.J. Lawrence said.

The VA has been without a permanent secretary since David Shulkin was fired in March as the result of a power struggle with political appointees assigned to the VA. Following his dismissal, Deputy Secretary Tom Bowman retired, and a handful of other leaders left the agency.

VA press secretary Curt Cashour said in a statement in April that the officials who left were "wedded to the status quo" and "not on board with this administration's policies or pace of change."

The Washington Post reported over the weekend that once Wilkie was VA secretary, he intended to form his own leadership team and reassign political appointees who were behind the staff departures.

The Post reported Cashour is searching for another job in the Trump administration. Camilo Sandoval, acting VA chief information officer, is expected to leave altogether, and John Uilyot, the VA assistant secretary for public and intergovernmental affairs, would likely be reassigned within the VA.

In a statement Monday, Cashour denied the report and said he had no plans to leave the department. Additionally, Cashour said Uilyot will remain in his position, and there will be "no change whatsoever" to his duties. Sandoval "is not leaving the

administration and will remain at VA," Cashour said.

The Post went on to report that Peter O'Rourke, who served as acting VA secretary for about two months, would be reassigned to a less visible role.

During O'Rourke's time as acting secretary, he engaged in a public feud with the VA inspector general, prompting the Senate to approve a measure that would prevent the VA from blocking the IG's attempts to investigate the agency.

Last week three lawmakers, all Democrats, asked the Justice Department to investigate O'Rourke for perjury after they suspected he lied in testimony to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs about his fight with the inspector general.

Senate Democrats asked for an investigation into O'Rourke following another Washington Post report that he was reassigning or purging employees who were perceived to be disloyal to Trump's administration.

Rep. Tim Walz, of Minnesota, the ranking Democrat on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, said he remains skeptical of Wilkie but is happy to see O'Rourke go.

"I look forward to bidding farewell to acting Secretary Peter O'Rourke, who has used his temporary status to intimidate the VA Inspector General and allegedly reshape the VA workforce for partisan gain," Walz said in a statement. "With [Wilkie's] confirmation ... O'Rourke will be rightfully replaced, and Congress will finally have someone at VA who we can hold accountable."

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# FEMA probe: Ex-official had improper relationships

By COLLEEN LONG  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The former head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's personnel office had improper sexual relationships with subordinates and created a "toxic" work environment that included giving preferential treatment to his fraternity brothers, according to a summary of an internal investigation obtained Monday by The Associated Press.

FEMA officials said Corey Coleman resigned June 18 amid the probe. The preliminary investigation began in January and was completed Friday.

FEMA administrator Brock Long said in a statement Monday that he was referring the case to the internal watchdog of its Fraternity, the Department of Homeland Security, which could investigate any claims of possible criminal sexual assault. But victims would have to go to police for any charges to result.

"Anyone who disagrees with this zero tolerance approach will not be welcome at FEMA," Long said. "Employees at FEMA devote their careers to caring for disaster survivors in their time of greatest need. We must care for our own with the same respect, compassion and advocacy that we bring to our external operations."

Coleman is not named in the summary, but officials at the agency confirmed details in the report referred to him. A call to his home Monday wasn't returned.

According to the summary, after Coleman had a sexual relationship with one subordinate in 2015, he continued to pressure her for dates. When she refused, she was denied a promotion.

He had a second inappropriate relationship two years later with another subordinate, according to the report.

Coleman granted preferential treatment to fraternity brothers, according to the report, in part because he said he could "trust them."

It said he intimidated staff and created a management structure in which he was the foremost hiring and firing authority, in part to circumvent subordinates who might question him. Investigators interviewed 73 witnesses and took 98 statements.

The allegations were first reported by The Washington Post. Long told the newspaper that investigators uncovered a systemic problem going back years.

The Post reported, citing unnamed sources, that Coleman also transferred some of the women he hired to regional offices so his friends could try to have relationships with them.



Courtesy of FEMA

**Former FEMA personnel chief Corey Coleman, shown in an image from the agency's website, resigned in June.**

# Lawmakers struggle to respond to Trump-Putin twists

By LISA MASCARO  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Congress is producing an unusual outpouring of bills, resolutions and new sanctions proposals to push back at President Donald Trump's approach to Vladimir Putin, shore up relations with NATO allies and prevent Russian interference in the midterm election.

But it remains uncertain if any of their efforts will yield results. Lawmakers are struggling with internal party divisions as well as their own onslaught of proposals as they try to move beyond a symbolic rebuke of Trump's interactions with the Russian president and exert influence both at home and abroad.

While many Democrats are eager for quick votes, some Republicans prefer none at all.

As Trump and Putin weigh another face-to-face meeting, lawmakers in both parties — particularly in the Senate — appear mo-

tivated to act.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell issued a rare warning that Russia "better quit messing around" in U.S. elections as he tasked two Senate committees to start working on sanctions-related legislation and other measures to deter Russia.

In the House, Speaker Paul Ryan joined McConnell in saying that Putin would not be welcome on Capitol Hill, though he did not push forward any Russia-related legislation before his chamber recessed for August.

The past few weeks have been one of the rare moments in the Trump era that Republicans and Democrats have jointly asserted the role of Congress as a counterweight to the administration.

"You look at the action of Congress since the summit in Helsinki, you find Democrats and Republicans both standing up and saying no," said Sen. Ben Cardin, D-Md., in an interview on C-SPAN with The Associated Press and The Washington Post.

For starters, there's a bipartisan push from Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz.; Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va.; and others to "explicitly prohibit" the president from withdrawing from NATO without Senate approval.

Other senators are debating action to prevent meddling in the midterm election. Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., and Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., call the protection of the election system a "national security priority."

Graham said it's "extremely important that Congress recognize the threat to our electoral system coming from Russia and act in a decisive way."

With some 100 days before the midterm election, some say Congress is not acting fast enough.

Ryan says the U.S. has "learned a great deal" about Russian interference. "So, I think we're far better prepared today than we were just a couple of years ago."

But the Speaker added there's more for Congress to do.



## NATION

## Juarez: 'I've been here for him all this time. Despite no documents, I am a military wife'

## FROM FRONT PAGE

They've got a plan in place, painful as it is: She will take their youngest daughter, Estela, to Mexico with her, because her husband often travels for business, although she said it feels like the 8-year-old is being deported as well.

Their older daughter, Pamela, will stay with her father because they don't believe the 16-year-old would be safe in Mexico.

They are trying to prepare the girls—both American citizens.

"I've been preaching to them you've got to be mentally tough—pretty much what they teach you in the Army," he said.

Even after Estela stood crying with her mother on the steps of the U.S. Capitol in April, pleading for help to keep her and her mother at home, the full brunt of what's about to happen has yet to sink in, her father said.

"Reality hasn't hit," he said. "Once it happens, you can tell they are going to crumble."

Their only hope is that a letter they wrote to Trump was passed along to him by their congressman during the president's visit to Florida on Tuesday for a campaign rally—and that the president will read it and act in their favor.

It's a long shot. Even Temo Juarez, 41, who leans conservative and is a Trump supporter, doubts it will happen.

"People who do business with me—they laughed (saying), 'You are a super conservative,'" he said. "I told them, 'I am eating my words.' At this late juncture, only the president can move quickly enough to stop this deportation."

## A broken law

Traditionally, spouses and family of U.S. military members have enjoyed a certain latitude from immigration authorities. People like Alejandra Juarez would be tagged, but left in place.

There is even an immigration policy for members of the military and their families called "parole in place" that recognizes "the important sacrifices made by U.S. armed forces members, veterans, enlistees and their families," according to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

But while immigration policy regarding military and veteran spouses has not changed, advocates say the Trump administration stance of zero tolerance has meant there is no longer an order of priority in enforcing immigration law.

Anyone found without legal status can face deportation, not just those who've committed crimes, said Paul Donnelly, a strategist with the nonprofit, American Families United, which advocates for immigration reform. He estimates that 11,800 active U.S. servicemembers have a spouse facing deportation; adding the spouses of veterans would make those figures higher, he said.

"These are not people knocking off banks and 7-Elevens," he said. "These are military families trying to get by, and it's a lousy thing to do."

CIS data appears to indicate a shift, showing an increase in



Courtesy of Alejandra Juarez

**Alejandra and Temo Juarez and their daughters Estela, left, and Pamela celebrate Christmas 2017 in Florida. Alejandra is facing deportation to Mexico this week after 20 years in the country.**

denials of requests for parole in place based on cases that were decided each year.

According to the data, in fiscal years 2015 and 2016 under President Barack Obama, 11 percent of the total parole in place cases that were decided were denied, while 89 percent were approved.

In fiscal 2017, which began in the last three months of the Obama presidency, the denials rose to 13 percent, and in the first eight months of the 2018 fiscal year, denials are up to 16 percent of the total cases decided.

USCIS denies there has been any change and says it has maintained a rate of 75 percent approval based on total requests each year, rather than cases decided.

Randall Emery, president of American Families United, said this is a disturbing development in the decades-long erosion of viable immigration law. "Alejandra's case just typifies the kind of case we see all the time," he said. "We are talking about people who we'd be happy to have as neighbors, who made a mistake in the past, who are integrated, who are part of society and who are contributing," he said. "It's in the national interest to have her home with her husband. It sends the wrong message to the troops when people have to worry about the safety of their spouses."

## 'A slap in the face'

Alejandra, who declined to mention her maiden name, came to the U.S. in 1998, looking for a better future.

She'd grown up in Mexico City with a dysfunctional family in a crime-riddled neighborhood.

She was just 19 she said, when she was smuggled across the bor-

der with the help of a coyote.

"If you get caught," the man told her, "lie and say you are American."

It didn't work.

A border officer told her that she could either sign a piece of paper to be sent back home or spend the next six months locked away in detention.

Speaking almost no English, she asked for an interpreter, but she said her request was ignored. So she signed the document and departed.

She snuck back in just days later, this time succeeding.

Three years later, life was good. She was living in Florida, had fallen in love with a U.S. Marine and they were getting married.

Temo Juarez had just finished his Marine Corps contract, having deployed to Africa and South America and, committed to serving, decided to join the Florida National Guard as a reservist.

Their daughter Pamela was born in October 2001, shortly after the 9/11 attacks. Temo's activation soon followed.

They learned how to be parents as he trained for war and after months of delays in getting naturalized, he became an American citizen just days before he deployed.

Pamela was not even 1 when her dad deployed. A six-month tour was extended, then extended again, turning into 16 months away. The baby walked for the first time while he was gone.

The deployment was hard. His unit was often under attack by rockets and mortars. He lost one buddy in a vehicle accident and a second was shot point-blank while serving in a security element for a senior officer.

Temo Juarez was proud of his service and thankful that he had

a wife who was there for him when things got tough. As the deployment was extended again and again, several of the marriages in their military community fell apart.

But Alejandra was his rock. She comforted him and was there to listen when he was at his wit's end. To this day, she said, he tells her that if it hadn't been for her, he doesn't believe he would have made it.

"I've been here for him all this time," she said. "Despite no documents, I am a military wife."

Days before her pending deportation, she said she believes it's her husband who is being betrayed.

"They are trying to punish me for what I did, but they are punishing him," she said. "I told him: 'You served this country three times and look what they are doing to you. It's a slap in the face.'"

## 'Asking for asylum'

Temo Juarez completed his military service after that tour but had moved on to build a flooring business.

He and his wife had a second daughter and lived a normal life. The girls, like their dad, are American. English is their first language.

She had no legal status, but they were comfortable that she was safe. During Temo's deployment, Alejandra had filed paperwork seeking to naturalize and she received a reply saying she would have to go back to Mexico and go into the U.S. embassy there to apply for citizenship.

She sought counsel and lawyers told her not to do it—she likely would not be let back into the country that was now home. Periodically, she would check to see whether there were any changes in the law. But the answer was always the same: Wait.

One day in 2013, Alejandra was pulled over in a routine traffic stop. The officer, she said, told her she "looked suspicious."

While the ticket was ultimately dropped, the officer, as the record reveals, said that she was illegal. Two weeks later, immigration enforcement officers came to her house.

They told her that in 1998, when she was captured and released, she signed a document used on occasion by border patrol to break the immigration removal order. Unbeknownst to the teenager, she had signed away her right to ever become an American citizen.

With no criminal record, Alejandra was not high priority for immigration officials, so they let her status slide and she was told to simply check in with authorities twice a year. But suddenly, her hopes of becoming legal were gone.

She now realized that had she gone to Mexico and walked into the U.S. Embassy seeking an application, she would never have been allowed to return. She also discovered that back then, there had been options for her.

"Now I know there is something called 'asylum,'" she said. "But 20 years ago, I didn't know."

## Dividing a family

Before the 2016 elections, Temo Juarez put his faith in candidate Trump. The conservative military man believed that the country needed a change and Trump could shake things up. He had faith that his service to his country would protect his family.

But immigration authorities have told Alejandra Juarez that her expedited removal order barred her from being eligible for parole in place and now, under zero tolerance, her's was no longer a low-priority case. She was informed that she was being deported. With their options narrowing, the couple pressed for a hearing before an immigration judge who could change her status. But she's been waiting years, and with time running out, they sought a political reprieve.

The congressman, Rep. Darren Soto, D-Fla., urged the Department of Homeland Security to grant her parole in place and a stay of removal until her case could be heard. He also cosponsored legislation, the Protect Patriot Families Act, seeking protection for military spouses and introduced a bill directly on her behalf to give her legal permanent resident status. Neither has been passed; if that were to happen, she could apply for citizenship.

Jose Canchales, director of Customs Enforcement denied the request for a stay of removal, and a final deportation date was set after being delayed once before.

"I will continue to support the Juarez family through this difficult situation and continue to fight against the Trump administration's heartless immigration policies tearing families apart," Soto said in a statement last week.

Temo Juarez said he is still proud of his country and of serving.

"I don't blame anybody," he said.

"We understand she violated the law and we are not asking for much," he said. "We are asking them to drop the deportation. We are not asking for anything else."

Alejandra said she knows the country owes her family better than this. She came from a broken family and has worked hard with her husband to give their children something better.

Now, the country he served is going to break their family, too.

"My family is very hurt by what is going on," she said.

"I never thought in my worst nightmare that I'd be deported. I thought they would take my husband's service into account. Not for me."

"But this administration doesn't care," she said bitterly.

Still, in a last-ditch effort, Temo Juarez wrote the president a letter through Soto asking for a reprieve. On Tuesday, Alejandra Juarez got a call from her lawyer saying that ICE had agreed to a review her most recent parole in place application.

It's not too promising. The enforcement arm of the immigration agency has rejected her previous three applications.

Still, they hope.

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## NATION

# Undercover video raises concerns over pig abuse

By COLLEEN SLEVIN  
Associated Press

DENVER — Recently released undercover video showing pigs being kicked, hit and punched at a Kentucky supplier for the world's largest meat producer drew prompt condemnation from animal rights groups and the agricultural industry alike.

The images sandwiched in between — adult pigs in cages barely bigger than their bodies and a piglet squealing while being castrated — show still widely accepted industry practices but were aimed at pressuring Brazilian-based JBS to abandon them.

Ten states — none major pork producers — have passed laws that ban or phase out the use of those narrow metal cages, known as gestation crates or stalls, where sows are confined during their frequent pregnancies.

Among them is California, where voters agreed to phase out the crates along with chicken cages and veal crates starting in 2015. This fall, voters will be asked to go further and ban the sale of pork from pigs confined to the crates, along with pork from their offspring. The measure also would bar the sale of veal from crated calves and eggs from caged chickens.

Massachusetts voters passed a similar ban in 2016 that takes effect in 2022.

Sows account for only about 6 percent of the pigs on American farms, but pork producers have been slow to give up confinement, said Josh Balk, vice president of farm animal protection for The Humane Society of the United States.

While shoppers are familiar with the bewildering array of cage-free and free-range egg options in stores, how pigs are raised is not something frequently touted on bacon or sausage packages.

Still, activists have made an impact with their gradual, state-by-state approach of passing ballot measures and bills to outlaw crates and by gathering pledges from more than 100 large restaurant and food companies including McDonald's, Chipotle and Target, to move away from suppliers that use gestation crates. Some meat producers have also pledged to phase them out.

The world's largest pork producer, Smithfield Foods, announced in January it had switched to open group housing for pregnant pigs at its company-owned U.S. farms. JBS has said it plans to transition to collective rather than individual crates by 2025. In January, it said 45 per-

cent of its suppliers have already made the switch.

JBS' U.S. branch, based in Greeley, Colo., suspended shipments from the Franklin, Ky., farm after the video was released last month by Los Angeles-based Mercy for Animals, a backer of the California proposal. It said it would investigate the incident at the farm operated by Tennessee-based Tosh Farms.

"Animal welfare is a priority for our company and our customers," JBS USA said in a statement at the time. "We will ensure that all of our suppliers adhere to our high standards for animal care."

**While shoppers are familiar with the bewildering array of cage-free and free-range egg options in stores, how pigs are raised is not something frequently touted on bacon or sausage packages.**

An estimated 75 percent of U.S. pig farms regularly use gestation stalls. The rest are owned by companies that pledged to cut stall use or are in states that ban it, and mostly use open pens instead, according to the National Pork Producers Council.

However, even most of those farms still use gestation stalls when sows are artificially inseminated, and some use them to test whether the sows are pregnant, council spokesman David Warner said. State bans, like Colorado's, typically include exceptions for testing, treatment or research.

After sows give birth, farms that use confinement usually put them in slightly larger farrowing stalls, which give them enough room to lie down and nurse their piglets.

Gestation stalls are intended to minimize fighting among hierarchical sows and protect workers from the pregnant animals, which can weigh between 350 and 450 pounds, said Sarah Crawford, assistant vice president of animal welfare for the National Pork Board in Des Moines, Iowa. She said the stalls are long enough for the animals to lie in, and research has shown some will choose a stall over living in a group.

"The good thing is farmers have the choice to decide what fits best for their farm," she said.



KIMBERLY A. WOOD, CASCADIA RESEARCH/ AP

A hybrid between a melon-headed whale and a rough-toothed dolphin, in the foreground, swims next to a melon-headed dolphin near Kauai, Hawaii, in August 2017.

## Rare hybrid whale-dolphin's no 'wholphin'

Associated Press

HONOLULU — Scientists are touting the first sighting of a hybrid between a melon-headed whale and a rough-toothed dolphin in the ocean off Hawaii. But don't call it a "wholphin," they say.

The melon-headed whale is one of the various species that's called a whale but is technically a dolphin.

"Calling it something like a wholphin doesn't make any sense," said one of the study's authors, Robin Baird, a Hawaii research biologist with Washington state-based Cascadia Research Collective. "I think calling it a wholphin just confuses the situation more than it already is."

In a study published last week, scientists say the animal spotted off the island of Kauai in August 2017 appears to be the first record of a hybrid involving either species. It's also only the third confirmed instance of a wild-born hybrid between species in the Delphinidae family.

The label "wholphin" has stuck for a hybrid born in 1985 at Hawaii's Sea Life Park of a false killer whale and an Atlantic bottlenose dolphin. The hybrid named Kekaimalu still lives at the marine mammal park, where she helps teach children about genetics.

News of the hybrid spotted in the wild during Navy-funded research to study the effects of sonar proves the "genetic diver-

sity of the ocean," said Sea Life Park Curator Jeff Pawloski. "I always thought they were out there in the wild existing — it only makes sense. And to know she has cousins out there in the ocean is an amazing thing to know."

While some news organizations have described the melon-headed whale and rough-toothed dolphin hybrid as a new species, in order for that to happen other things need to occur, including more widespread hybridization, Baird said.

"That isn't the case, although there are examples where hybridization has resulted in a new species," he said. "There's no evidence to suggest it's leading toward anything like species formation."

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## NATION

# Wildfires threaten 10K homes in N. Calif.

By MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ  
AND SUDHIN THANAWALA  
Associated Press

LAKEPORT, Calif. — Twin wildfires tearing through vineyards and brushy hills threatened some 10,000 homes in Northern California on Tuesday — yet another front in the seemingly endless summer of wildfires that have ravaged some of the most scenic areas of the state.

The two fires straddling Mendocino and Lake counties had burned seven homes by Monday night along with some 107 square miles of rural land.

About 100 miles north, the so-called Carr Fire that has burned more than 800 homes and killed six people has become the ninth-most destructive wildfire in California history, said Scott McLean, a spokesman for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

In Lake County, evacuation orders were in effect for the 4,700-resident town of Lakeport along with some smaller communities and a section of Mendocino National Forest. In all, some 10,000 people have been warned to flee, fire officials said.

Lakeport, north of San Francisco, is the county seat and a popular destination for bass anglers and boaters on the shores of Clear Lake. By Monday night it was a ghost town, the main streets deserted.

A few miles away embers, ash and smoke swirled through vineyards where at least one



NOAH BERGER/AP

A firefighter battles the River Fire as it tears through Lakeport, Calif., on Monday.

home had gone up in flames. Firefighters set blazes at the bottom of hills to burn up the tinder-dry brush before flames cresting the ridge tops could feed on it and surge downhill. A fleet of aircraft made continuous water and fire retardant drops on the blaze, filling the air with the roar of their engines.

Not everyone heeded orders issued Sunday and Monday to evacuate.

Derick Hughes II remained behind at his property in Nice, Calif., where he ran sprinklers on his roof and removed yard plants that could catch fire.

The 32-year-old Marine Corps veteran sent his wife and two daughters to safety along with three carloads of belongings. But he said he had too much at stake to leave. He bought his three-bedroom house last year using a loan from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

"This is everything I bled for, and I've worked really hard to get to where I am, and

I'm just not willing to give it up so easily," he said over the phone. "Some people may think that's selfish of me, and I have insurance. But the way things go, I'd rather not start over."

Farther north, police said five people were arrested on suspicion of entering areas evacuated due to the explosive wildfire around Redding. The blaze, which killed two firefighters and four civilians including two children, has now destroyed 818 homes and 311 outbuildings and damaged 165 homes, McLean said.

More than 27,000 people remained evacuated from their homes although another 10,000 were allowed to return Monday as fire crews reinforced lines on the western end of Carr Fire. Some 12,000 firefighters were battling the blaze. Fire officials were hopeful that they could make progress containing the blaze, which was 23 percent contained.

Those fires were among 17 burning across the state.

# CBS will keep CEO as probe conducted

By MAE ANDERSON  
Associated Press

NEW YORK — CBS will keep CEO Les Moonves in place during an investigation of sexual misconduct charges against him, the company said. It will hire an outside counsel to conduct the probe.

On Friday a New Yorker article quoted six women who accused Moonves of sexual misconduct over a span of three decades. The alleged behavior included forced kissing, unwanted sexual advances and career retaliation against women who rebuffed him.

CBS issued a statement even before the article was published saying it took the allegations seriously and would begin an investigation.

The CBS board on Monday also voted to postpone the shareholder meeting that had been scheduled for Aug. 10 to a later date yet to be determined. It reports its quarterly earnings on Thursday. Shares closed down 5 percent at \$51.28, and were largely unchanged in after-hours trading.

If its CEO is suspended or departs altogether, CBS would lose its chief amid rapid change in the entertainment industry and a corporate battle with media mogul Shari Redstone, who controls both CBS and its corporate sibling Viacom.

Moonves joined CBS in 1995 as president of CBS Entertainment and quickly climbed the ranks, becoming CEO of CBS Television in 1998 and CEO of the newly created CBS Corp. in 2006 after it split from Viacom. He revived the company, which operates the CBS network, Showtime and other entities, with hit shows like "NCIS" and "The Big Bang Theory."

More recently, the CBS chief introduced separate streaming CBS and Showtime services as more people "cut the cord" and watch TV online. The network consistently tops its rivals in prime-time ratings.

"He's done a terrific job in focusing the company on important franchises and pushing them to the future" with streaming services, said Moody's analyst Neil Begley.

Moonves is also pushing to keep CBS independent against the wishes of Redstone, who wants to combine CBS with Viacom.

A likely successor, at least on an interim basis, is Chief Operating Officer Joseph Lanniello, analysts said. Lanniello, who has held his current position since 2013, has steered top projects such as the CBS All Access and Showtime streaming services. But he doesn't have a creative or sales background, which might make him an awkward long-term leader for the company.

Another possible successor is Viacom CEO Bob Bakish, at least if Redstone gets her way.

# Prosecutor: Minneapolis police shooting justified

By YOUSSEF RDDAD  
AND AMY FORLITI  
Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Two Minneapolis police officers who shot and killed a black man last month were justified in using deadly force, a prosecutor announced Monday, saying the man was fleeing police and turned toward them with a loaded gun before he was shot.

Hennepin County Attorney Mike Freeman said Thurman Blevins had refused commands to stop and show his hands, and was clearly a danger to the officers and community. "Their decision to use deadly force against Mr. Blevins under those circumstances was authorized," Freeman said, adding that the officers will not be criminally charged.

His statements were in prepared remarks that were handed out to the media. Freeman had tried to make the announcement during a news conference, but he was shouted down by Blevins'

**“Their decision to use deadly force against Mr. Blevins under those circumstances was authorized.”**

Mike Freeman  
Hennepin County attorney

friends and family members. They argue Blevins was no threat to anybody and was just jostling with a woman and his child.

"He was forced to run away from his family so they wouldn't shoot him down in his own community in front of his kid," said Sydnee Brown, a cousin.

Freeman's decision came after the city released the officers' body-camera video late Sunday.

Freeman's report says Officers Justin Schmidt and Ryan Kelly were responding to a 911 call of a man firing a gun into the air June 23 on the city's north side. Body camera videos show them pulling their cruiser up and Blevins seated on a curb near a woman with a

child in a stroller.

As the officers pull up, one says, "He's got a gun!" and they jump from the squad car.

Schmidt yells "Put your (expletive) hands up now!" as Blevins runs. Schmidt also yells, "Put your hands up! I will (expletive) shoot you!" Kelly yells, "Stop or I'll shoot!" repeatedly.

In a chase that takes less than a minute, Blevins yells back, "I didn't do nothing bro," "Please don't shoot" and "Leave me alone." An enhanced version of the videos has a red circle drawn around what appears to be a gun in Blevins' right hand, as he looks over his left shoulder at the officers.

After the chase turns down an alley, Blevins is shot, still running.

At Freeman's aborted news conference, Jennifer Rohr, a friend of the Blevins family, criticized the officer who said "He's got a gun." He just gave himself license to shoot Mr. Blevins," Rohr said. She said Blevins was "assassinated."

In interviews with investigators, Schmidt said he feared for his life when he saw Blevins take his gun out of his pocket. Kelly said he believed the gun was aimed directly at him, and he was "pretty sure" Blevins fired the weapon at him.

The report from Freeman's office says a shell casing from Blevins' gun was found near his body. In a conference call with reporters, Freeman said authorities can't be certain that Blevins shot at the officers, but it is irrelevant to the charging decision. He said merely pointing a handgun at officers is a threat that allows the officers to protect themselves.



## NATION

## Veterans group urges halt to 3D printed guns

By NIKKI WENTLING  
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A group of veterans who advise the largest gun control advocacy organization in the United States urged the State Department to halt its plans to allow downloadable designs for 3D-printed guns to be published online.

The Veterans Advisory Council for Everytown for Gun Safety described the printable, hard-to-trace guns as a threat to national security and public safety. In a letter, 15 veterans on the council called on Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to step in and block blueprints to manufacture the guns from being posted online, which is slated to start Wednesday.

"We know firsthand the destructive power of firearms — and the dangers of firearms in the wrong hands," the veterans wrote to Pompeo.

In 2013, the State Department stopped the Texas-based company Defense Distributed from publishing gun blueprints, arguing it violated federal export laws because some of them were downloaded outside the United States.

In late June, the federal government reached a settlement with the company to allow it to resume posting the designs. The settlement allows Defense Distributed to start posting the blueprints online Wednesday, but as of Sunday 1,000 people had already downloaded the plans for AR-15-style, semi-automatic assault rifles, according to Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro.

Pennsylvania was one of eight states to file a lawsuit Monday against President



JAY JANNER, AUSTIN (TEXAS) AMERICAN-STATESMAN/AP

Cody Wilson holds what he calls a Liberator pistol that was made on a 3D printer at his home in Austin, Texas, in 2013.

Donald Trump's administration over its decision to allow distribution of the blueprints. In a separate move, 21 state attorneys general called on Pompeo and U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions to back out of their settlement with the company.

On Tuesday, Democrats in the Senate introduced legislation in a last-ditch effort to continue the ban on printable guns. During a news conference at the Capitol, the lawmakers described it as a "deadly mistake" and a "self-inflicted public safety crisis."

"Coming to a theater near you, coming to a school near you, coming to a sports stadium, to any public place," Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., said while pointing to an image of a 3D printed semi-automatic assault rifle. "These ghost guns are the new wave of American gun violence. The failure to ban them will mean blood on the hands of officials who have that responsibility."

Trump addressed the issue on Twitter on Tuesday morning and tweeted: "I am

looking into 3-D Plastic Guns being sold to the public. Already spoke to NRA, doesn't seem to make much sense!"

Later Tuesday, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., criticized Trump for waiting to look into it until the day before the blueprints were scheduled to go online. "Where the heck has he been?" Schumer asked. "This idea that he'll look into it, we've been down that rabbit hole before. On issue after issue, the Trump administration's M.O. when there's a crisis is to say, 'We'll look into it. We're working with the NRA.' And then nothing happens. We're going to have to pass legislation."

The Democrats — as well as members of Everytown's Veterans Advisory Council — argued the plastic guns would be untraceable, difficult to detect in metal detectors and would require no background check. Sen. Ed Markey, D-Mass., called it the "ultimate gun loophole."

"We support the federal laws that work to keep the public safe, which rely on criminal background checks to block gun possession by those who pose a danger to society," the Veterans Advisory Council wrote. "And we believe strongly that downloadable firearms will undermine those laws, enabling anyone to print their own AR-15 or handgun with commercially available 3D printing technology."

Everytown created the Veterans Advisory Council in May to weigh in on policy proposals and testify to Congress, using their combat experience and firearm expertise as reasons why their opinions should carry weight.

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## Ex-Trump campaign chairman's trial begins

By CHAD DAY AND ERIC TUCKER  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Jury selection got underway Tuesday in the trial of President Donald Trump's former campaign chairman, Paul Manafort, on tax evasion and bank fraud charges.

Manafort, who is already in custody and could spend the rest of his life in jail, appeared in the federal courtroom in Alexandria, Va., in a dark suit with his wife, Kathleen. Meanwhile, dozens of potential jurors assembled to answer questions from the judge and lawyers as to whether they can be impartial.

It's the first trial to result from special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into potential ties between the Trump presidential campaign and Russia. While prosecutors weren't expected to address the question of possible collusion between Trump and Russia, Manafort's case was viewed by some as a test of the legitimacy of Mueller's probe, which Trump has dismissed as a "witch hunt."

Manafort is accused of trying to hide tens of millions of dollars in Ukrainian political consulting fees and using that money to fund a lavish lifestyle. He is the only American charged by Mueller to opt for a trial.

Prosecutors have lined up 35 witnesses and more than 500 pieces of evidence



MANUEL BALCE CENETA/AP

Protesters hold banners Tuesday in front of the Alexandria Federal Court in Alexandria, Va., as jury selection began in Paul Manafort's trial.

they say will show how Manafort earned more than \$60 million from his Ukrainian work and then concealed a "significant percentage" of that money from the IRS. Prosecutors will also argue that Manafort fraudulently obtained millions more in bank loans, including during his time on the campaign.

The pool of jurors will face questions from both sides and U.S. District Judge T.S. Ellis III as they try to weed out potential prejudice in what has become a highly publicized and politically divisive investigation.

Prosecutors say they will introduce evidence that a chairman of one of the banks allowed Manafort to file inaccurate loan information in exchange for a role on the Republican campaign and the

promise of a job in the Trump administration that never materialized.

Before the start of jury selection Tuesday, prosecutors filed an expanded list of its evidence exhibits, including several email chains between Manafort and Stephen Calk, a Chicago bank chairman. The added evidence also appears to include documents related to bank accounts in Cyprus.

At the center of much of the trial will be another Trump campaign aide, Rick Gates, who spent years working for Manafort in Ukraine and is also accused of helping him falsify paperwork used to obtain the bank loans. Gates, who cut a plea deal with Mueller earlier this year, is expected to testify against his former mentor.

## Trump echoes Giuliani: 'Collusion is not a crime'

By JOHN T. BENNETT  
CQ-Roll Call

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump, after repeatedly denying campaign coordination with Russia, on Tuesday claimed such "collusion is not a crime."

The president has repeatedly said since taking office that neither he nor his 2016 campaign associates worked with Russian officials or individuals during his race against Democratic foe Hillary Clinton. But, as his attorney Rudolph Giuliani did on Monday, Trump muddled those waters on Tuesday.

"Collusion is not a crime, but that doesn't matter because there was No Collusion (except by Crood Hillary and the Democrats!)" Trump wrote.

That came after a confusing Monday morning media tour by Giuliani, during which he first floated his collusion as legal theory. Friendly Fox News anchors agreed. A less-friendly CNN host looked stunned.

The former New York City mayor and U.S. attorney, and now Trump, appear to be trying to influence public opinion about the Justice Department's Russia probe of possible campaign coordination and whether Trump obstructed justice since taking office with moves related to the investigation, including firing then-FBI Director James Comey.

Legal experts say Giuliani and Trump have a point: There is no federal law or statute making campaign collusion a crime.

But they also say special counsel Robert Mueller would bring charges of conspiracy, making false statements to federal investigators or obstructing justice. Those are federal crimes.

## NATION

# 'It keeps us safe'

## NYC bathroom set up to help stem drug overdoses

By JENNIFER PELTZ  
Associated Press

NEW YORK — At an unassuming storefront on a busy Brooklyn street, people sign up to use a bathroom outfitted to try to curb an overdose crisis.

Waiting his turn, a man named Robert is frank about why he's there instead of one of the stairwells, parks, rooftops or porches where he has used heroin in the past.

"It keeps us safe. It keeps us from getting arrested. You feel secure here," said Robert, who discussed his drug use on condition that his last name not be used because he fears arrest and damage to family relationships. "You know that someone's paying attention if you fall out in there. ... You know they're not going to let nothing happen to you."

As communities debate trying to stem overdose deaths by allowing safe havens for people to take heroin and other narcotics, places like this needle exchange program are quietly providing a model of sorts: bathrooms monitored by intercom so someone can intervene to stop an overdose.

Officially, they aren't the more full-fledged and controversial facilities — often called safe injection sites — that cities including New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Seattle are seeking to open and that already operate overseas. At the same time, some counties and cities preemptively have banned injection sites, and federal officials have said they're illegal.

While the discussion plays out, Robert and about a dozen other people turned up on a recent afternoon to use the bathroom off the green and orange drop-in room at VOCAL-NY, where work includes needle exchange, support groups and advocacy campaigns.

A sign on the bathroom allows 10 minutes "to take care of business." But every three minutes, a staffer checks in by intercom. If there's no response, the staffer will release the door lock and come in, ready to administer anti-overdose medication. In eight years, a few people have overdosed but all have been rescued, VOCAL said.

If not official, the restroom isn't exactly underground, either. State Health Department policies suggest that needle exchange programs' bathrooms have such safeguards.

"This bathroom is literally a response to hundreds of overdose deaths in bathrooms and streets across the city," said Jeremy Saunders, VOCAL's co-executive director. "You can say we're enabling people, but what we would say is, 'At what point do you want us to stop caring?'"

### Evidence of benefits 'clear'

Opioid drugs — including pain pills, heroin and the heavy-duty painkiller fentanyl — have spawned the deadliest epidemic of drug overdoses in U.S. history. It has killed more than 47,000 people nationwide in the



PHOTOS BY MARY ALTAFFER/AP

Peer educator Chris Marshal takes a nap July 3 as a member signs in before using the bathroom at the VOCAL-NY headquarters in the Brooklyn borough of New York. VOCAL-NY runs a needle exchange and harm-reduction services, as well as overdose prevention and other services for people who use drugs.



Evelyn Milan, right, director of services at VOCAL-NY, prepares a package with sterile injection equipment for a member July 3 at the organization's headquarters.

12 months that ended in November, the most recent federal data.

About 100 supervised injection sites have opened in Canada, Australia and Europe during the past 30 years. At least one has been operating under the radar somewhere in the U.S. since 2014, according to a research paper.

The mayor of the college town of Ithaca, N.Y., proposed a supervised injection space in 2016. Now New York is seeking state and community approval for a one-year test of four "overdose prevention centers" at privately run syringe-exchange programs, and Philadelphia is looking for organizations interested in running or funding injection sites.

San Francisco initially hoped to open two sites this summer or fall but now isn't setting a time frame while working through legal issues. Seattle has budgeted \$1.3 million this year to work toward launching a site, while opponents have been trying for a public vote on banning it.

A typical site would go well beyond VOCAL's bathroom, offering a space with tables or booths set up with sterile syringes, alcohol swabs and other accoutrements.

As people injected themselves, staffers would watch for trouble signs and would jump in with overdose-reversing drugs, if needed. Workers would look for oppor-

tunities to discuss treatment, and advocates argue the caring-but-not-coercive approach helps people make changes. But the main goal is simply survival.

"You can't detox if you're dead. You can't treat someone if they're dead," said Cassandra Frederique, New York state director of the Drug Policy Alliance, which advocates for less-restrictive drug laws.

There has never been a reported overdose death at a supervised injection site, according to studies that say the facilities also reduce HIV infections and 911 calls for overdoses, among other problems. Researchers estimated New York's City's proposal could prevent 130 deaths and could save \$7 million in health care expenses per year.

"The evidence is absolutely clear that (the concept) has these great benefits," said injection-site researcher Alex Kral, a researcher at the RTI International research institute. "Once people understand it, I have a hard time understanding how anyone could be against it."

### 'Total fear'

Tell that to Snohomish County Councilman Nate Nehring, who recently spearheaded a safe-injection-site ban in his county north of Seattle; they're also pro-

hibited in some Snohomish cities and Pierce County, south of Seattle.

"I don't see where the compassion is in just handing someone a needle so they can shoot up heroin for the rest of their lives," said Nehring, a Republican. "True compassion is saying, 'We're not going to let you live this way. ... We're absolutely willing to help you with our resources, but you've got to get clean.'"

Members of a Colorado General Assembly committee had similar qualms when they recently nixed a proposal to allow a site in Denver.

In Baltimore, Health Commissioner Dr. Leana Wen said taking steps toward an injection site without federal approval could jeopardize funding that the city can't afford to lose.

U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Jerome Adams has called the facilities illegal. While the Justice Department declined to comment on injection sites, Vermont U.S. Attorney Christina Nolan's office has said injection-site staffers could face criminal charges and landlords forfeiture under a federal law against operating a place for narcotics use.

In New York, city special narcotics prosecutor Bridget Brennan fears injection facilities would stoke neighborhood resentment, would risk legal problems and would send misleading signals that drug use can be "safe." But Police Commissioner James O'Neill said the sites are worth trying, though the city's five district attorneys are divided on the issue.

There's no such debate at VOCAL-NY, where reminders of the dangers of drug use are as close as a framed artwork by a 28-year-old who died of an overdose.

Or as close as VOCAL activists and newcomers Levele and Nilda Painter, sitting beside each other.

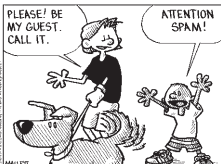
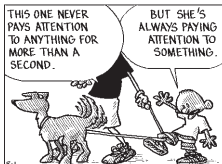
Nilda, 46, survived three overdoses and three strokes related to her former heroin use. Levele, 50, said he'd have "kicked the door in" to get to a safe injection site, rather than the underpasses, condemned buildings and other locales where he used to use heroin, crack and marijuana.

He remembers times when he knew he'd gone too far and thought his heart was about to stop or burst. He felt "total fear that I was about to die."

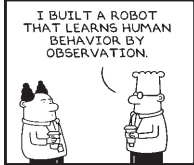
"Those are moments that I would never want anyone else to live," he said, and chokes up.

"It's OK, baby," Nilda said. "You're OK today."

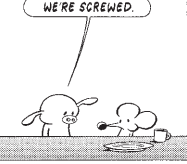
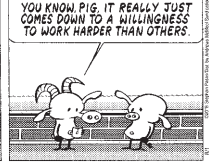
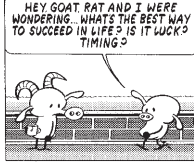
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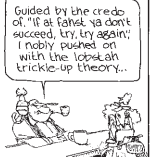
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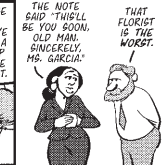
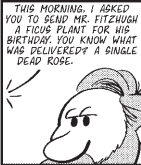
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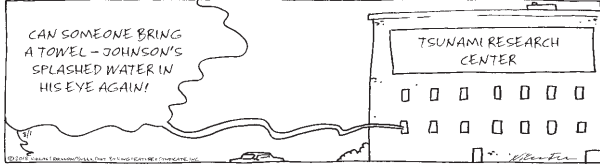
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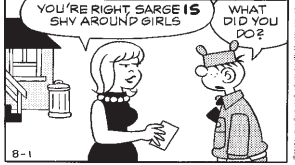
Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



# Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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57				58				59			

## ACROSS

- 1 Poet Teasdale
- 5 Moving vehicle
- 8 Converse
- 12 Final notice
- 13 Altar affirmative
- 14 Timber wolf
- 15 Short-tempered folks
- 17 Detail
- 18 Seeps
- 19 Luxury boats
- 21 March Madness gp.
- 24 "King Kong" studio
- 25 "Funny!"
- 28 Enjoy
- 30 "This tastes terrible!"
- 33 Tic-tac-toe loser
- 34 Fun partner
- 35 "Cheers" bartender
- 36 Retrieve
- 37 —friendly
- 38 Steerer's place
- 39 In favor of
- 41 "Monopoly" cubes
- 43 Zodiac sign
- 46 Jaunty chapeau
- 50 Broad
- 51 Bigwigs
- 54 Jason's ship
- 55 Lincoln nickname
- 56 Now, in a memo
- 57 Beholds

## DOWN

- 2 "Peek-—"!
- 3 Cracker name
- 4 Goddess of wisdom
- 5 By way of
- 6 Put two and two together?
- 7 Inquisitive
- 8 Computer mouse sound
- 9 Plant-growing site
- 10 Help a hood
- 11 Male turkeys
- 16 Computer key
- 20 God of war
- 22 Regrettably
- 23 Picked a target
- 25 Glutton
- 26 Chopper
- 27 Sundae topper
- 29 Russell of "Watress"
- 31 Cowboy's sweetie
- 32 "Let me think ..."
- 34 Mentor
- 38 Donkey's comment
- 40 Two-tone cookies
- 42 "CSI" network
- 43 "Jabberwocky" starter
- 44 Suffix for million
- 45 Roe provider
- 47 Valentine flower
- 48 Coup d'—
- 49 Recipe amts.
- 52 Kimono closer
- 53 Sawbuck

## Answer to Previous Puzzle

H	M	O	S		S	U	B		M	A	C	S
E	A	R	P		O	N	A		E	R	A	T
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D	A	N	C	E			N	E	R	O		
Y	E	A	H		P	E	T	E	R	O	S	E
E	R	G		S	L	U	R	S		V	O	W
R	O	S	E	M	A	R	Y		C	U	R	E
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8-1

## CRYPTOQUIP

Z C N U P F N I S N W L  
 N R T E X N W T I N H , P Z P K K  
 X G K K B G I D L E D T W I X C B U N  
 T U H E N U H N S N W L B U N  
 S N R N H D N E E T F N E .

Yesterday's Cryptquip: WHAT MIGHT YOU CALL A PERSON WHO STOKES THE FUEL SUPPLY FOR A STEAM ENGINE? THE COAL-KEEPER.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: S equals V



## WORLD

# Chinese radio warnings concern Philippines

By JIM GOMEZ

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines has expressed concern to China over an increasing number of Chinese radio messages warning Philippine aircraft and ships to stay away from newly fortified islands and other territories in the South China Sea claimed by both countries, officials said Monday.

A Philippine government report sent by The Associated Press showed that in the second half of last year, Philippine military aircraft received Chinese radio warnings at least 46 times while patrolling near artificial islands built by China in the South China Sea's Spratly archipelago.

The Chinese radio messages were "meant to step up their tac-

tics to our pilots conducting maritime air surveillance in the West Philippine Sea," the report said, using the Philippine name for the South China Sea.

Philippine officials have raised their concern twice over the radio transmissions, including in a meeting with Chinese counterparts in Manila earlier this year that focused on the Asian countries' long-unresolved territorial disputes, according to two officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the issue publicly.

It's a new problem that emerged after China transformed seven disputed reefs into islands using dredged sand in the Spratlys, where the new islands now stand in close proximity to islands occupied by Vietnam, the Philip-

pines and Taiwan. Malaysia and Brunei are the other claimants to the chain of islands and barren islets and atolls.

The messages originated from Chinese coast guard ships in past years, but military officials suspect transmissions now are also being sent from the Beijing-held artificial islands, where far more powerful communications and surveillance equipment has been installed along with weapons such as surface-to-air missiles.

"Our ships and aircraft have observed an increase in radio queries that appear to originate from new land-based facilities in the South China Sea," Commander Clay Doss, public affairs officer of the U.S. 7th Fleet, told the AP by email in response to questions about the Chinese messages.

"These communications do not

affect our operations," Doss said.

Although the U.S. lays no claims to the strategic waterway, its Navy has deployed ships and aircraft in operations to promote freedom of navigation and overflight, but which China protests as foreign meddling in an Asian dispute.

U.S. Navy ships and aircraft communicate routinely with regional navies, including the Chinese navy. "The vast majority of these communications are professional, and when that is not the case, those issues are addressed by appropriate diplomatic and military channels," Doss said.

A Philippine air force plane on patrol near the Chinese-held islands received a particularly offensive radio message in late January when it was warned by Chinese forces that it was "en-

dangering the security of the Chinese reef. Leave immediately and keep off to avoid misunderstanding," according to the Philippine government report.

Shortly afterward, the plane received a veiled threat: "Philippine military aircraft, I am warning you again, leave immediately or you will pay the possible consequences." The Filipino pilot later "sighted two flare warning signals from the reef," said the report, which identified the Chinese-occupied island as Gaven Reef.

Chinese Embassy officials did not reply to requests for comment, but Beijing officials have repeatedly said they have the right to build on what they say is their territory and defend their sovereignty at all costs.

## Malaysian official quits over Flight 370 lapses

Associated Press

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia — Malaysia's civil aviation chief said Tuesday he has resigned to take responsibility after an independent investigative report highlighted shortcomings in the air traffic control center during Malaysia Airlines Flight 370's disappearance four years ago.

The report released Monday raised the possibility that the jet may have been hijacked even though there was no conclusive evidence of why it went off course and flew for over seven hours after severing communications.

Azharuddin Abdul Rahman said the report didn't blame the civil aviation department for the plane's loss but found that the Kuala Lumpur air traffic control center failed to comply with operating procedures.

"Therefore, it is with regret and after much thought and contemplation that I have decided to resign as chairman of Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia," he said in his statement, adding he has presented his resignation and will step down in two weeks.

The jet carrying 239 people from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing vanished March 8, 2014, and is presumed to have crashed in the Indian Ocean. The investigative report, prepared by a 19-member international team, said the cause of the disappearance cannot be determined until the wreckage and the plane's black boxes are found.

However, the report said the investigation showed lapses by air traffic control, including a failure

to swiftly initiate an emergency response and monitor radar continuously, relying too much on information from Malaysia Airlines and not getting in touch with the military for help.

New Malaysian Transport Minister Anthony Loke said Tuesday the government has formed a committee to investigate and take action in any misconduct based on the report's findings.

The report said there was insufficient information to determine if the aircraft broke up in the air or during impact with the ocean.

Scattered pieces of debris that washed ashore on African beaches and Indian Ocean islands indicated a distant remote stretch of the ocean where the plane likely crashed. But a government search by Australia, Malaysia and China failed to pinpoint a location. A second, private search by U.S. company Ocean Infinity that finished at the end of May also found no sign of a crash site.

Grace Subathirai Nathan, whose mother was aboard the plane, said the outcome could have been different if Malaysia's air traffic control didn't commit "horrible mistakes."

She welcomed the "display of accountability" by Azharuddin, who headed operations at the time of the jet's disappearance and gave daily media briefings, but said he has "taken the easy way out."

"He has not explained the failings of the controllers, why it happened, what caused it? Was it incompetence? Was it neglect? What was it?" she wrote on Facebook.

"I hope that immediate action is taken against all the people who made these mistakes as a lesson for these people who hold a huge responsibility to take their jobs more seriously so that we can avoid disasters like this from happening again," Nathan said.



CHRISTINE GARCIA/AP

Government forces inspect the site of an explosion in Basilan province, southern Philippines, on Tuesday.

## Bomb kills at least 11 in Philippines

Associated Press

LAMITAN, Philippines — A bomb-laden van driven by a suspected Abu Sayyaf militant went off in a powerful blast Tuesday that killed 11 people, including a soldier, five militiamen and the driver in a brazen attack that reignited terrorism fears in the southern Philippines.

Regional military spokesman Lt. Col. Gerry Besana said six army scout rangers and a militiaman were wounded in the explosion after dawn outside an army militia outpost that tore a crater on the road and damaged the outpost in Lamitan city in one of the worst terrorist attacks in the country this year.

Militiamen, who have been alerted to possible bombings, stopped the van at a checkpoint in Colonia village, where the bomb went off, military officials said.

"If he triggered the bomb, he was probably waiting for a more opportune time to inflict harm on a bigger number of people," Besana said by phone, referring to the driver, who died in the blast. "That's their death wish — the more, the merrier."

The Philippine government condemned the terrorist attack, calling it a "war crime."

Investigators have yet to determine if the bomb or

bombs were being carried in the van or the vehicle had been turned into a car bomb, Besana said, adding it was also unclear if the explosive was remotely detonated or was set off by the driver in a suicide attack.

Militiaman Gregorio Inso, who survived but lost his wife to the blast, said the van was flagged down for inspection by his colleagues outside the militia outpost. When the driver apparently wanted to restart the engine, the militiamen looked inside and saw suspicious strands of wire inside the van and called a group of scout rangers.

"When the rangers were approaching, the vehicle suddenly exploded," Inso said. "When I looked again everyone was dead."

Military spokesman Col. Edgardo Arevalo said the driver, who witnesses described as looking scared and who did not respond to questions at the checkpoint, could be an Abu Sayyaf militant under a ruthless commander, Furuji Indama, who recently plotted bombings in predominantly Muslim Basilan.

Government forces have also been put on alert in the south, scene of decades-long Muslim separatist unrest, after President Rodrigo Duterte signed a new autonomy agreement last week with the biggest Muslim rebel group in the country.

## WORLD

## Bodies of 70 killed in deadly Greek wildfire are identified

Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece — The bodies of 70 people killed by Greece's deadliest wildfire in decades have been identified, authorities said Tuesday, as forensic experts continue work to identify more remains recovered from the area.

Separately, the coast guard said Tuesday it had recovered the body of a woman from the sea in the Saronic Gulf south of Athens, many miles away from the site of the blaze. The body had not been identified and it was unclear whether it was related to the July 23 blaze that devastated the seaside resort of Mati northeast of Athens.

On Monday, coast guard special operations divers recovered

another body from the waters off the coast of the fire area, believed to be of someone who drowned in an effort to escape. Identification was also pending.

During the blaze, hundreds of people fled to beaches, and many were forced to swim out to sea to escape the flames and choking smoke. A massive search operation involving vessels and divers continues in the waters near the fire zone.

At least 91 people are believed to have died in the blaze, but confusion surrounds the exact death toll.

On Sunday, the fire department said 59 bodies had been identified, while the identification procedure was pending for another

28. Four other people died of their injuries in hospitals.

However, the department explained on Tuesday that coroners found some bodies were so badly burned that some body bags contained the remains of more than one person. The intensity of the heat during the fire was such that it even melted metal, turning the hub caps of cars into molten rivulets.

That has led the fire department to stop issuing information about the number of bodies believed to have been recovered, changing instead to relating the number of identified victims.

A list of people officially registered as unaccounted for stood at 14.



TSVANGIRAYI MUKWAZHI/AP

People look at election results placed outside a polling station in Harare, Zimbabwe, on Tuesday.

## Zimbabwe: Election clean; opposition skeptical

By CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA

Associated Press

HARARE, Zimbabwe — Zimbabwe's electoral commission said Tuesday there had been no vote-rigging in the first election without Robert Mugabe on the ballot, but the opposition alleged irregularities as an anxious nation awaited the first official results.

Dozens of opposition supporters gathered at their headquarters in the capital, Harare, celebrating in the belief that they had won the presidential election based on results they said they collected from agents in the field. Police with water cannons circulated in the area.

Zimbabweans hope the election will help to lift their country out of economic and political stagnation. Millions peacefully cast their ballots on Monday in a process closely watched by international monitors, who have yet to make formal announcements

about whether the election was free and fair.

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission said the first results were expected Tuesday afternoon, with the final tally expected within five days. The turnout varied from 60 to 78 percent, with some areas still reporting.

"The atmosphere has remained peaceful" and the commission had not received any major complaints about how the election was conducted, chief Priscilla Chigumba told reporters.

She said she was confident there was no "cheating" and that the commission will respect the will of Zimbabweans. "We will not steal their choice of leaders; we will not subvert their will," she said.

Hours after Chigumba spoke, the main opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change, said voting results were not posted outside 21 percent of the country's nearly 11,000 polling stations as the law requires,

raising concerns about possible vote-rigging.

Opposition leader Nelson Chamisa, 40, a lawyer and pastor, has said he would lead peaceful protests if the vote is found to be flawed.

The other main contender is President Emmerson Mnangagwa, 75, a former deputy president and Mugabe confidante who has reinvented himself as a candidate for change.

Both candidates issued upbeat assessments of how they did, though they said they were waiting for the electoral commission to make the final announcement as required by law.

If no presidential candidate wins more than 50 percent of the vote, a runoff will be held Sept. 8.

More than 5.5 million people were registered to vote in an election featuring a record number of more than 20 presidential candidates and nearly 130 political parties vying for parliamentary seats.



MICHAEL PROBST/AP

Two girls ride their scooters through the shimmering heat on the tarmac of a former military airport in Frankfurt, Germany, on Monday.

## Animals, crops hurt by Europe's harsh heat wave

Associated Press

BERLIN — The heat wave gripping large stretches of Europe has already been blamed for deadly forest fires and crop failures. Now freshwater fish could be its next victims.

Some regions in Germany sweltered as the mercury hit 102 Fahrenheit, and the German Meteorological Office said the country's all-time record of 104.5 Fahrenheit could be topped Tuesday.

Rivers like the Rhine and the Elbe have soaked up so much heat that fish are beginning to suffocate.

"I'm expecting a tragedy as soon as next week," Philipp Sieher from the Swiss Fishery Association told German news agency dpa.

In Hamburg, authorities collected almost 11,000 pounds of dead fish from ponds over the weekend, dpa reported. Firefighters have started pumping fresh water into some ponds and lakes in a bid to raise oxygen levels.

Scientists say the record heat seen in Europe, North America and parts of Asia this year points to the influence of man-made climate change and could become more common in future.

Several of Germany's nuclear power stations are reducing energy output because rivers used to cool the power plants are too warm.

The low water levels have also made shipping more difficult, with a complete ban imposed on boats on the Oder River in eastern Germany.

Meanwhile, the country's Farmer's Association is asking the government for \$1.17 billion in financial aid to help cover losses from this year's poor harvest.

Association President Joachim

Rukwied said German farmers expect the grain harvest to be 20 percent smaller than last year, with rapeseed crops down 30 percent, as it has barely rained during the past 12 weeks, dpa reported.

A group representing potato farmers said they're expecting harvests to be 25 percent smaller than last year and warned that the losses may lead not only to more expensive but also shorter French fries because the spuds are so small this year.

The oceans, too, have been affected. Authorities in Poland last week banned swimming at more than 50 beaches along its Baltic coast after hot weather led to the growth of toxic bacteria in the unusually warm sea. Water temperatures in the Baltic Sea exceeded 73.4 F in some places.

Emergency water rescuers told vacationers on hot, sandy beaches — from Swinoujscie in the west to Gdynia in the east — not to enter the sea, where thick, green-brown cyanobacteria colonies have grown and pose a health threat.

Police dogs in the Swiss city of Zurich have been getting special shoes to prevent them from burning their paws on the scorching streets. Authorities have also canceled fireworks displays in some areas during Wednesday's national holiday celebrations, citing the risk of forest fires.

Temperatures of up to 113 F are forecast on the Iberian peninsula from Wednesday, and authorities are preparing for the mercury to climb even higher through Sunday, increasing the risk of forest fires.

On the other side of the continent, Banak peninsula in northern Norway reported temperatures Monday of 89.6 degrees Fahrenheit — highly unusual for the Arctic Circle.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Woman aims to be 'chief donut officer'

**CT** WALLINGFORD — There are a great many career paths to be chosen in 2018. But for one Connecticut woman, "chief donut officer" is the dream.

Gina Nero, 37, of Wallingford, is one of the five finalists vying for the title in a contest by famed baker Entenmann's.

The 120-year-old company is selecting one person to receive the honorary title, doughnut company gear, \$5,000 and a year's supply of the company's doughnuts.

The public will have a chance to vote for their favorite candidate on the Entenmann's website until Aug. 7.

## Lawn mower seen as cause of house fire

**VT** MORRISTOWN — Vermont State Police said a lawn mower appears to have caused a shed fire that spread to a propane tank and house.

Police said a passer-by saw the house fire in Morristown on Saturday night and alerted the couple inside to get out. A firefighter was treated for minor injuries after falling down a set of stairs in the house while fighting the fire.

Police said the homeowner had just finished cutting the lawn and had parked the mower inside the shed, which caught fire. The fire spread to a propane tank and then to the house.

The home sustained serious damage to the back side.

## State apologizes over closed lemonade stand

**NY** BALLSTON SPA — New York's state Department of Health has apologized to a 7-year-old while investigating why a woman who appeared to be one of its inspectors shut down his lemonade stand.

Brendan Mulvaney told the Times Union that he was "really mad" on Friday when a woman wearing a green health department shirt told his parents he couldn't sell 75-cent lemonade without a permit.

Spokeswoman Jill Montag said the department does not inspect children's lemonade stands.

## Firefighters put out flames at other station

**NE** OMAHA — Firefighters from a northwestern Omaha station put out a fire that erupted at another Omaha fire station.

A battalion chief caught a whiff of smoke at the station a little after 10 a.m. Sunday and found the station kitchen ablaze. He called for help because most of the firefighters assigned there were out on a call.

Fire crews from a station less than 5 miles away responded. It took about 15 minutes to put out the fire in the kitchen and living areas. No injuries were reported.

Most of the station's firefighters and equipment were moved temporarily to another station.

## THE CENSUS

# 200

The weight in pounds of marijuana New York State Police say they seized after pulling over a vehicle on a Hudson Valley road. Troopers said Sunday that they pulled over a rented pickup truck Friday in Montgomery and a strong odor of pot spurred a search. They said they found dozens of plastic bags filled with pot with a total value of more than \$1 million. A 35-year-old man from Stamford, Conn., and a 69-year-old man from New Rochelle, N.Y., were arrested.



CHRIS PIETSCH, THE (EUGENE, ORE.) REGISTER-GUARD/AP

## Balloons on parade

Amie Swallow joins a contingent of balloon costume-wearing friends rolling and walking on Broadway Avenue in Eugene, Ore., on Sunday for the second annual EUG Parade.

## Man makes beer run with alligator in hand

**FL** JACKSONVILLE — A man made a beer run into a Florida convenience store carrying a live alligator with its mouth taped shut.

Video posted by television station WTLV shows the unidentified man walking into the Jacksonville store holding the alligator with his right hand.

He sees someone in the back of the store and says, "Is he taking the last bit of beer? You aren't taking the last bit of beer, are you?" The man with the alligator jokingly runs at the other man as people in the store laugh. He then grabs a 12-pack of beer.

The television station said Florida wildlife investigators are looking into the incident.

## 3 men jump off bridge; 1 dies from injuries

**PA** PITTSBURGH — Three men jumped off a truss bridge spanning a river in Pittsburgh over the weekend, and one died.

Police said the men weren't trying to take their own lives but

didn't elaborate on why the trio jumped off the Hot Metal Bridge on Sunday night.

First responders found the men in the Monongahela River about 8:40 p.m. One of them had injuries and was having difficulty swimming.

Police said that 25-year-old man died later at a hospital.

The other men were uninjured. No charges have been filed.

## Stolen Mighty Mouse sculpture returned

**KS** WICHITA — A Wichita artist said he's elated that a sculpture of Mighty Mouse that was stolen from his home has been returned.

Christopher Gulick said the 200-pound wooden sculpture was taken from his front porch July 25. Another artist gave him the sculpture more than 20 years ago.

KSNW-TV reported a Wichita resident called police after discovering the mouse in his yard Sunday.

Gulick said he's glad to have Mighty Mouse back but he will have to do some work to repair parts that were damaged

## Valuable painting returns to town

**MA** NORTHATTLEBOROUGH — A valuable painting that hung unnoticed in a Massachusetts school for decades is coming back to town after 11 years in storage and following a fight over whether to sell it.

The Sun Chronicle reported the piece by Russian artist Alexandre Iacovlev, titled "Afghans," would be returned to North Attleborough on Tuesday and will be displayed in the police station's lobby.

The painting was donated to the town in 1951 and hung in a school until 2007, when a resident brought its value to the attention of officials. The town wanted to sell it and to use the money to fund art education. It could have fetched as much as \$2 million.

A relative of the donors objected.

## Vandals damage 114 cemetery gravestones

**WI** MERRILL — Police in north-central Wisconsin are looking for the vandals who damaged more than 100 gravestones at a cemetery last

weekend.

Police in Merrill believe the damage happened Friday night. The damage was discovered Saturday morning. Police said Sunday they had no suspects or leads.

The Wausau Daily Herald reports 114 gravestones were damaged at Merrill Memorial Park Cemetery.

## New Orleans band's equipment is stolen

**LA** NEW ORLEANS — A local New Orleans funk band said its equipment was stolen near a popular bar in the city's Uptown area.

News outlets reported the New Orleans Suspects said in a Facebook post last month that their equipment was taken from their van while it was parked around the corner from the Maple Leaf Bar.

The band set up a GoFundMe page to raise money to replace the gear. The group listed some of the items it lost on the fundraising site including keyboards, guitar amps and a custom drum kit.

The Suspects began playing together in 2009.

From wire reports



## FACES

## As 'Guardians' cast calls for James Gunn's return, Pratt praises him

By LIBBY HILL  
Los Angeles Times

The Guardians of the Galaxy have found a new mission, and it has nothing to do with Thanos.

On Monday, assorted cast members turned to social media to share an open letter calling for the reinstatement of the franchise's director, James Gunn, who was fired by Walt Disney Co. on July 20.

"Although I don't support James Gunn's inappropriate jokes from years ago, he is a

good man," "Guardians" star Chris Pratt wrote on Instagram, his first official comment on Disney's decision.

"I'd personally love to see him reinstated as director of "Volume 3." If you please, read the following statement — signed by our entire cast," he continued.

Pratt's language can be seen echoed in postings by fellow cast mates, suggesting a standardized comment aimed at distancing themselves from Gunn's previous actions.

Gunn was fired after some years-old tweets resurfaced featuring the director

joking about topics including rape, pedophilia, 9/11 and the Holocaust.

During the fallout, Gunn apologized for being a different person in the past.

The open letter from the cast admonishes the lack of due process in the court of public opinion, in addition to repeating the actors' love and support for their director.

"We fully support James Gunn. We were all shocked by his abrupt firing last week and have intentionally waited these ten days to respond in order to think, pray, lis-

ten and discuss," the letter opens.

"In that time, we've been encouraged by the outpouring of support from fans and members of the media who wish to see James reinstated as director of "Volume 3" as well as discouraged by those so easily duped into believing the many outlandish conspiracy theories surrounding him."

It adds, "We hope Americans from across the political spectrum can ease up on the character assassinations and stop weaponizing mob mentality."



## REUNITED

## Stars share screen, this time playing romantic partners

By LYNN ELBER  
Associated Press

Julia Roberts and Dermot Mulroney are reunited on screen, and to hear them bicker, it feels so good.

The actors, who starred on the big screen in "My Best Friend's Wedding" and "August: Osage County," play romantic partners in the upcoming Amazon drama "Homecoming."

Roberts had to correct "Homecoming" producer Eli Horowitz's reference to this being her second go-around with Mulroney as her boyfriend.

"We were best friends," Roberts

said of 1997's "My Best Friend's Wedding," stressing "best friends" and drawing laughs from a meeting of TV critics. Mulroney played her sister's fiancé in 2013's "August: Osage County," and finally, Roberts said, "my boyfriend."

"It only took 30 years," she said. The actress flashed her trademark broad grin.

Mulroney lavished praise on Roberts, whom he called an "incredible actress" and close pal in real life.

"It's always been such a privilege to work with Julia," he said.

"Did everybody get that?" Roberts teasingly asked.

"Did you get all that about how

grateful I am to have a buddy like Jules?" Mulroney said, smiling.

Their latest project, debuting Nov. 2 on Amazon's streaming service, is based on the podcast of the same name.

The cast also includes Bobby Cannavale and Stephan James.

Roberts, among the A-list movie stars finding satisfaction in the expanding world of so-called peak TV, said there's no longer a distinction between the best of the big and small screens.

"I didn't really think about it ("Homecoming") as small screen," she said. Besides, she joked, "my television is very big."

Julia Roberts, from left, Stephan James, Bobby Cannavale and Dermot Mulroney participate in the "Homecoming" panel during the TCA Summer Press Tour last week.

RICHARD SHOTWELL, INVISION/AP

## Alex Trebek can see life without 'Jeopardy'

Speaking Monday on Fox News' "OBJECTIFIED," Alex Trebek, 78, said the odds are 50/50, "and a little less," he won't return to the game show he's hosted since 1984 when his contract expires in 2020.

He noted he'll be 80 and will have hosted the show for 36 years. Trebek says he'll continue if he's still enjoying it and "not making too many mistakes." But he also wants to make an "intelligent decision" when it's time to hang it up.

Trebek says he suggested to the producer to consider Alex Faust, who does play-

by-play for the Los Angeles Kings hockey team, as a replacement. He also suggested attorney and commentator Laura Coates.

"Jeopardy!" went on hiatus after Trebek underwent brain surgery late last year.

From The Associated Press

Alex Trebek says when the time comes, Alex Faust or Laura Coates could take over for him as the host of "Jeopardy."

AP



## Film inclusion report says rhetoric doesn't equal results

Despite enthusiastic discourse around diversity in film, a report from the University of Southern California's Annenberg Inclusion Initiative released Tuesday says when it comes to the numbers, little has changed. The most popular movies are still largely the domain of white, straight, able-bodied men, in front of the camera and behind.

The percentage of female characters with speaking parts in the top 100 films has remained largely unchanged at or around 30 percent over the past decade, according to the report released Tuesday. And in the survey of the top 100 films of 2017, only 33 featured women in a lead or co-lead. Four of those were from an underrepresented group, and five were over the age of 45.

Women of color are still among the most marginalized, which the report calls an epidemic of invisibility. In 2017, 64 of the top 100 films did not include a single Latina character, 65 were missing Asian females, and 43 were devoid of any black female characters. 78 films were without a female character with a disability and 94 absent of an LGBT female.

The Annenberg Inclusion Initiative has been tracking and examining the top 100 films every year since 2007.

## Acts break country chart record

It was just meant to be: Pop singer Bebe Rexha and country duo Florida Georgia Line's massive crossover hit "Meant to Be" has broken a new record on Billboard's Hot country songs chart, remaining in the No. 1 spot for 35 weeks.

Billboard reports the song, which was dually promoted to country and pop radio, passed Sam Hunt's previous powerhouse "Body Like a Back Road," which held the record for 34 weeks in 2017. The chart encompasses streaming, sales and airplay. Written by Rexha, FGL's Tyler Hubbard, Josh Miller and David Garcia, "Meant to Be" has peaked at No. 2 on Billboard's Hot 100 chart.

The song has been No. 1 on the country charts since it debuted at the top spot in December.

"Meant to Be" has also made history for Rexha. She surpassed Taylor Swift for the longest leading No. 1 on the country charts for a song sung by a lead female.

## Other news

■ Alan Alda says he has Parkinson's disease. Appearing Tuesday on "CBS This Morning," the former "M\*A\*S\*H" star said he was diagnosed with the neurodegenerative disorder 3½ years ago. The 82-year-old says he's not angry and considers it a challenge.

■ Demi Lovato remains in the hospital nearly a week after she reportedly suffered a drug overdose. The "Confident" singer is dealing with "complications" such as a high fever and nausea six days after she was taken to the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, TMZ reported, citing a source.

■ Lindsay Lohan's reality-TV series is a go. MTV on Monday confirmed the actress-entrepreneur's statements that the cable network was planning a behind-the-scenes reality show about her newly opened beach club. The series, under the working title "Lohan Beach Club," has begun shooting and is scheduled to premiere next year.

From wire reports

## BUSINESS/WEATHER

## Fed set to leave rates alone amid trade war

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Federal Reserve will meet this week to assess an economy that has just enjoyed a healthy spurt of growth but faces a flurry of trade fights pushed by President Donald Trump that could imperil that growth over time.

If those concerns weren't enough, Trump has openly expressed his displeasure at the Fed's interest rate increases — something no president has done publicly in more than two decades.

No one expects the Fed to announce a rate increase when its latest policy meeting ends Wednesday. But the central bank is widely expected to set the stage for tightening credit again in September for a third time this year and then likely raise rates once again by December.

This year's rate increases follow three increases in 2017 and one each in 2015 and 2016.

The central bank's rate increases — to a still-low level — reflect the economy's resilience and are intended to prevent growth from overheating or inflation from accelerating too high.

But higher rates make borrowing costlier for consumers and businesses and can weigh down stock prices. Trump has made clear he has little patience for the Fed's efforts to restrain the economy to control inflation. "Tightening now hurts all that we have done," Trump tweeted last month, a day after he said in a television interview that he was "not happy" with the Fed's rate increases.

Some of Trump's economic advisers, notably Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, have tried to strike a reassuring note

**'I think trade and the trade war will be at the top of the Fed's agenda when they meet. It is the No. 1 threat they see right now.'**

**Mark Zandi**  
chief economist at Moody's Analytics

that the White House doesn't want to interfere with the Fed's policymaking.

"We as an administration absolutely support the independence of the Fed, and the president has made it clear that this is the Fed's decision," Mnuchin said on "Fox News Sunday."

"The market expects interest rates to keep going up. So, the only question is how far and for how long? And we think the Fed will be very careful in managing the economy."

The administration's message is that although borrowing rates remain historically low, tighter credit could eventually imperil an economy that grew at a brisk 4.1 percent annual rate in the April-June quarter, the government estimated Friday. Unemployment is at 4 percent.

But there is worry, too, reflected in periodic sinking spells in financial markets, often involving developments in the Trump-led trade war, which has resulted in punitive tariffs on billions of dollars of U.S. and foreign goods. To help ease that pain and help shore up Trump's political support in farm states, the Trump administration has rolled out a \$12 billion aid package for farmers who have lost markets for their soybeans in China and elsewhere.

A battle between the United States and China — the world's

two biggest economies — could escalate and harm growth prospects in the United States as well as globally.

"I think trade and the trade war will be at the top of the Fed's agenda when they meet," said Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics. "It is the No. 1 threat they see right now."

A trade battle with escalating tariffs raises the risk of slowing growth.

The Fed would normally respond by delaying any planned rate increases or, if the harm to the economy were seen as severe enough, actually cutting rates. But higher tariffs are also likely to put upward pressure on inflation — a prospect the Fed would normally address by raising rates.

Still, if the threat to the economy grows serious enough, the Fed could slow or even suspend its rate increases.

In the situation of a full-blown trade war, the Fed would delay hiking interest rates," predicted Sung Won Sohn, chief economist at SS Economics, a consulting firm. "If the higher tariffs slow economic growth and reduce employment and at the same time boost inflation, that would be the worst situation the Fed could face."

For now, economists see signs of hope, including an agreement

between the Trump administration and the head of the European Commission to try to work out their trade conflict.

Delivering the Fed's semi-annual report to Congress last month, Chairman Jerome Powell refrained from criticizing the Trump administration's effort to use the threat of tariffs to try to lower trade barriers. But Powell noted that the Fed was hearing a "rising chorus of concern" from business contacts about the harm a trade war could cause.

Powell hasn't publicly addressed Trump's criticism of Fed rate increases. But the chairman had previously said in a radio interview that the central bank has long operated independently in making interest rate decisions based on what was best for the economy and not in response to political pressure.

"For now, Powell has the allies he needs within the Fed to maintain independence," said Diane Swonk, chief economist at Grant Thornton in Chicago.

The CME Group, which tracks futures trading based on expectations for Fed rate increases, foresees virtually no chance of an increase Wednesday but near-certainty of one in September and a high likelihood of an additional rate increase by December.

Zandi said he thinks the Fed will indeed see up raising rates four times this year and four more times in 2019 to try to ensure that low unemployment and an economy fueled by tax cuts and higher government spending don't ignite inflation.

"I think the Fed will ignore the president," Zandi said. "If they do anything with regard to his comments, they will tend to be more aggressive in hiking rates to make sure financial markets don't start to question the Fed's independence."

## EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Aug. 1)	\$1.2042
Solar buys (Aug. 1)	69.8304
British pound (Aug. 1)	\$1.35
Japanese yen (Aug. 1)	108.20
South Korean won (Aug. 1)	1,090.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3780
Britain (Pound)	1.3129
Canada (Dollar)	1.3042
China (Yuan)	6.8192
Denmark (Krone)	6.3644
Egypt (Pound)	17.8100
Euro	1.1705/0.8543
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8484
Hungary (Forint)	274.27
Israel (Shekel)	3.6747
Japan (Yen)	111.91
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3028
Norway (Krone)	8.1513
Philippines (Peso)	53.08
Poland (Zloty)	3.66
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7509
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3617
South Korea (Won)	1,116.42
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9897
Thailand (Baht)	33.22
Turkey (Lira)	4.9041

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Nonmilitary exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany, check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank currency rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

## INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	5.00
Discount rate	2.50
Federated funds market rate	3.91
3-month bill	1.98
30-year bond	3.11

## MARKET WATCH

July 30, 2018

Dow Jones Industrials	-144.23
	25,306.83
Nasdaq composite	-107.42
	7,630.00
Standard & Poor's 500	-16.22
	2,802.60
Russell 2000	-10.21
	1,653.13

## WEATHER OUTLOOK



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

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Stars and Stripes (USPS 0417900) is published weekdays (except Dec. 25 and Jan. 1) for 50 cents Monday through Thursday and for \$1 on Friday by Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 450002, APO AF 96301-5002. Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, CA. Postmaster: Send address changes to Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 450002, APO AF 96301-5002.

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## OPINION

## Reduce the unneeded 4-star overhead

By DOUGLAS MACGREGOR  
Special to Stars and Stripes

It's official. The White House approved the appointment of a new four-star general to lead Army Futures Command. This act raises the total number of four-star generals and admirals on active duty in the U.S. military to 35 — an all-time high for an active-duty force of just more than a million soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines.

It was not always so. There was a time when fewer four-stars meant more fighting power.

From March 1942 to April 1945 when Gen. George C. Marshall was responsible for 8.3 million soldiers and airmen serving in nine theaters of war, Marshall managed to do his job with the assistance of only three other four-star generals: Douglas MacArthur, Henry "Hap" Arnold and Dwight Eisenhower. Some readers may wonder how 8.2 million soldiers and airmen could fight in the largest and most destructive war in human history under the command and control of only four four-star generals.

One reason was Marshall's grasp of Winston Churchill's maxim that, "Failure in war is most often the absence of one detecting many of the wrongs being done." Marshall knew from experience with failed attempts to reform the U.S. Army during the interwar period that more four-stars promised exhausting debates about desperately needed changes in the Army's organization; the implementation of new warfare-fighting methods and reductions in the Army's command echelons. For anything to change and change quickly, Marshall had to take control.

When Marshall received the executive order from President Franklin D. Roosevelt in February 1942 authorizing him to reorganize the War Department, Marshall acted swiftly to make the Army staff in the Pentagon more manageable and responsive. Marshall said the staff of 700 officers had become "a huge, bureaucratic, ride-tape-ridden, operating agency. It slowed down everything." Marshall removed 600 officers, reducing the staff to 122.

During the war, Marshall demanded selfless service from his generals and penalized those who put their personal ambitions ahead of the nation's needs. When World War II ended, Marshall promoted younger men and retired older men despite their wartime service and experience.

Marshall always spoke frankly to Roosevelt, who usually deferred to Marshall's judgment on military matters. Though they did occasionally disagree, very few people knew it.

Things have changed. Since 2001, a host of four-stars supported by enormous staffs of officers and contractors have set the strategic agendas for three presidential administrations. In the end, all of the "celebrity" four-stars in Iraq and Afghanistan argued for the same solution: billions of dollars and more troops. They received both and failed to deliver any strategic benefit to the American people.

The Defense Department needs a new business model. If framed management consultant Peter Drucker were here to counsel the president, he would say, "Too many four-stars means too many meetings, too many competing agendas and too little accountability for a force with too few soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines that

can actually fight." It's time for President Donald Trump to consider his options, because he really has only three courses of action:

1) Do nothing. Like Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, let the 35 four-stars and the service bureaucracies set the strategic agenda.

2) Convene a commission of the usual "inside the Beltway" suspects — Beltway consultants, Ivy League academics, retired four-stars, ex-senators and former service secretaries — to study the problem and submit a lengthy report in two years.

3) Select a new secretary of defense; a strong, decisive leader, a leader who (like Marshall) will compel unity of effort by reducing the unneeded four-star overhead; a secretary without personal attachment to the services who understands that American forces organized for the past will be defeated in the future.

To be fair, Marshall had some advantages over today's four-stars. Marshall never pretended to be a "warrior-scholar." Marshall did not contend with an industry of pseudo experts and pundits from Washington think tanks, eager to write articles for publication on his behalf. His greatest advantage may well have been his ignorance of the science of PowerPoint briefings.

Today, there is no one like Marshall in the senior ranks. As a result, the sooner Trump heeds the advice of Drucker and changes the four-star business model with a new secretary of defense, the sooner he — not the 35 four-stars — will set the strategic agenda.

Douglas Macgregor is a retired U.S. Army colonel, a combat veteran, and the author of five books, including "Margin of Victory."

## Run the numbers on both GI retirement options

By STEVE GALING  
Special to Stars and Stripes

Effective Jan. 1, the uniformed services have a new retirement system, the Blended Retirement System. BRS is significantly different than previous retirement systems, as it is a combination of a defined-benefit plan and a defined-contribution plan. Prior to this year, the uniformed services had exclusively used defined-benefit systems (i.e., the government does not contribute cash to his or her retirement). Under BRS, a member's annuity will be based on a combination of the government's defined benefit (the formula: 2 percent times years of service times the average of the highest 36 months basic pay) and the amount of funds accumulated in the member's Thrift Savings Plan account. The TSP portion of the annuity will vary depending on the amount the member invested and the performance of the underlying investments.

Who is eligible to opt in to BRS?

Active-duty members with fewer than 12 years of service as of Dec. 31, 2017, can either remain in the current defined-benefit system (the formula: 2.5 percent times years of service times the average of the highest 36 months basic pay, referred to as High-3) or opt in to BRS. For reservists, members with fewer than 4,320 retirement points as of Dec. 31, 2017, can remain in the current system or opt in to BRS. Years of service for reservists are determined by dividing the amount of accumulated retirement points by 360.

Should I remain in the current system or should I opt in to BRS?

Both retirement systems are excellent, and will provide a solid lifelong financial foundation for you and your family. To assist you, the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, led by Of-

fice of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Military Personnel Policy), in partnership with the uniformed services, has developed and fielded myriad educational programs. A good starting point is the Blended Retirement Resource Center (<http://militarypay.defense.gov/>). Of particular note are the extensive training courses that have been fielded the past two years. Working with Joint Knowledge Online, there are numerous courses members can take at their own pace. For example, in June 2016, the leadership course was released. This essential information for leaders at all levels of command about the basics of BRS. In January 2017, an in-depth course was fielded with explanations on High-3 and BRS options, including several examples of personnel at various stages in their careers. In 2017, the Mandatory Opt-In course was fielded to ensure members had the requisite knowledge to decide if BRS was right for them.

The website also has a "4-Star BRS Checklist to Success." Item 3 encourages members to use the online calculator, fielded in June 2017. The calculator (<https://militarypay.defense.gov/Calculators>) enables members to compare their projected retirement annuities under each retirement system. Members should first take the Mandatory Opt-In Course and familiarize themselves with the assumptions (click on the link near the bottom of the first page, <https://jokdirect.ftm.mil>).

The calculator enables users to run many scenarios, change variables such as the TSP contribution percentage, TSP return rate, life expectancy, TSP withdrawal age and promotion dates. Each scenario projects the future and present value of each retirement system.

The fourth item in the checklist encourages members to seek financial counseling before making your decision. The Defense

Department and the uniformed services have counselors available to assist you in understanding the financial implications of your decision. They can also assist members in developing a financial plan to account for expenses, minimize bad debt and develop a systematic savings and investment program. Members can also seek advice from sources outside the DOD, like your current financial adviser or another financial organization that works with the military community.

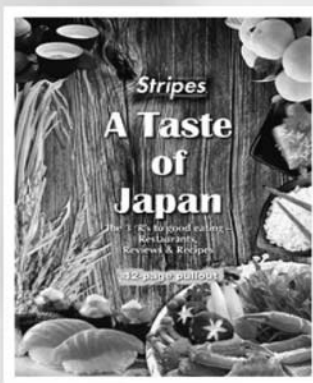
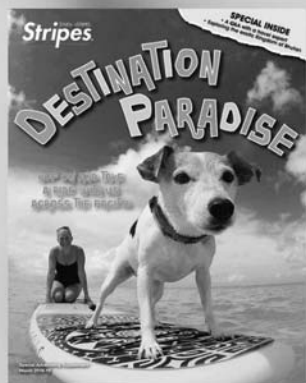
Use the financial decision.

Use the financial decision. The BRS is better financially than High-3. Under other scenarios, the High-3 annuity exceeds BRS. Should I opt in? While every member is different, probably the most important variable is whether you intend to serve 20 or more years in the active or reserve component. If you plan on leaving before 20 years, you should strongly consider opting in. If you opt in, you will receive government TSP matching. (A 1 percent government contribution is automatic, and you can receive up to an additional 4 percent if you contribute at least 5 percent of your basic pay into TSP.) This option allows you to keep some of your savings for your civilian retirement one day.

However, if you plan on serving 20 or more years, you should carefully consider remaining in the High-3 system, as the BRS annuity is 20 percent lower than High-3. If you choose to remain in the High-3 system, you will not receive any matching benefit, but after 20 years you will have both a higher annuity plus your TSP contributions when you retire.

Steve Galing is a relationship manager for AAFMAA Wealth Management & Trust LLC. The views expressed are his own. Information provided by AAFMAA Wealth Management & Trust LLC is not intended to be tax or legal advice. Nothing contained in this communication should be interpreted as such.

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## MLB

## Roundup

## Swihart wins it for Red Sox in 13th inning

Associated Press

BOSTON — Blake Swihart has been waiting for his chance to make an impact as the third catcher on a Red Sox team that is putting together a historic season.

On Monday night, he waited all the way until the 13th inning.

After entering the game in the 10th as a pinch-hitter, Swihart bounced a double into the Red Sox bullpen to score Eduardo Nunez in the 13th and give Boston a 2-1 victory over the Philadelphia Phillies. After the game, the Red Sox announced they had acquired second baseman Ian Kinsler from the Los Angeles Angels to replace the injured Dustin Pedroia.

"Ian's a really good defensive player," said president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski, who also brought Kinsler to the Detroit Tigers when he was general manager there. "Basically, it's what we hoped, early in the year, that Dustin would be."

With the win, the Red Sox improved to a major league-best 75-33 for the season and a season-high six games ahead of the New York Yankees in the AL East.

It was Swihart's first career walk-off RBI.

"He's stuck with it all year long," said Boston starter David Price, who allowed one run in eight innings but did not get a decision. "He hasn't gotten a lot of opportunities early on. His number's been called here recently, and he's stepped up to it. It's good when that happens, and I'm happy for him."

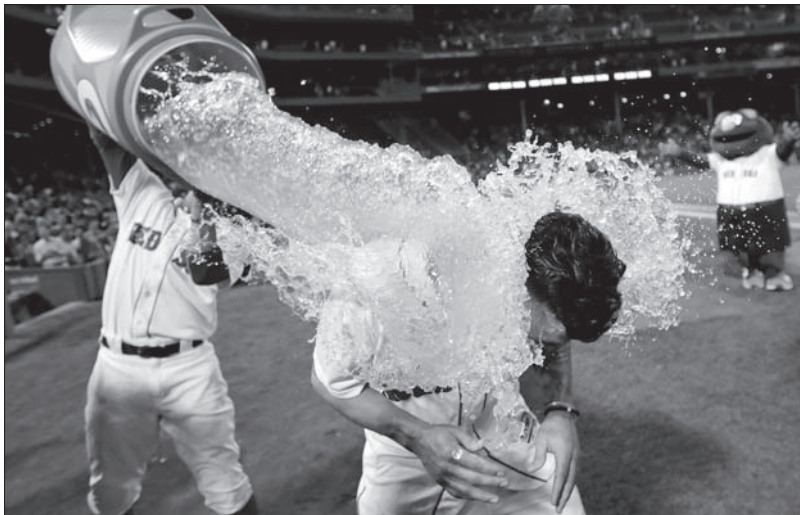
Hector Velazquez (7-0) pitched a scoreless inning for the win and Austin Davis (1-1) took the loss after pitching a perfect inning before allowing Nunez's leadoff single in the 13th. Luis Garcia, the 12th pitcher of the night, struck out Brock Holt but allowed Nunez to steal second.

**Mariners 2, Astros 0:** James Paxton (9-4) excelled in his return from the disabled list, Nelson Cruz had a two-run double in the sixth inning and host Seattle beat Houston.

Astros starter Gerrit Cole (10-3) carried a no-hitter into the sixth, but Jean Segura ended it with a two-out infield single. Two batters later, Cruz lined his double down the left field line.

**Brewers 5, Dodgers 2:** Eric Thames hit a three-run home run and Christian Yelich extended his hitting streak to 14 games as visiting Milwaukee overcame a brief power outage delay and beat Los Angeles.

Manny Machado homered in the ninth inning in his first home game with the Dodgers. Machado went 1-for-3 with two



CHARLES KRUPA/AP

The Red Sox's Blake Swihart, right, is doused with sports drink after his walk-off RBI double off Philadelphia Phillies relief pitcher Luis Garcia during the 13th inning of Monday's game at Fenway Park in Boston. At left is Red Sox second baseman Brock Holt.

walks, delivering his 26th home run to center field off reliever Corey Knebel. He struck out in the fourth inning with two runners in scoring position.

**Twins 5, Indians 4:** Mitch Garver drove in the winning run with a one-out double in the ninth inning, capping a victory over Cleveland after host Minnesota traded away reliever Zach Duke and starter Lance Lynn.

Jose Ramirez hit two home runs to match Boston's J.D. Martinez for the most in the majors with 32, but the Indians couldn't hold a 3-2 lead.

**Braves 5, Marlins 3:** Freddie Freeman hit a go-ahead homer in the third inning, Ronald Acuna Jr. also went deep and host Atlanta beat Miami.

Brian Anderson's two-run homer off Julio Teheran (8-7) in the first gave Miami a lead Wei-Yin Chen (3-8) couldn't hold. The Braves pulled even in the second when

Tyler Flowers walked, moved to third on Johan Camargo's double and scored on Ender Inciarte's fly ball. Camargo scored on Teheran's two-out single up the middle.

**Cardinals 5, Rockies 4 (10):** Marcell Ozuna hit his first career game-ending homer in the 10th inning, and host St. Louis snapped Colorado's four-game winning streak.

Ozuna connected against Jake McGee (1-4), sending a one-out drive deep to center for his 13th home. The slugger also extended his homer streak to three straight games.

**Athletics 10, Blue Jays 1:** Edwin Jackson (2-2) pitched scoreless ball into the sixth for his 100th career victory and host Oakland rediscovered its offense to thump Toronto.

Jonathan Lucroy drove in three as the A's used their signature power to clear the fences and get back on track after being

swept in a three-game weekend series at Colorado, scoring four total runs at Coors Field following a season-best six-game winning streak.

**Rangers 9, Diamondbacks 5:** Shin-Soo Choo homered twice and had four RBIs, helping visiting Texas rally after a power outage delay to beat Arizona.

Choo hit a three-run homer off Robbie Ray in the fifth inning and added a solo shot against Matt Andriese (0-1) in the eighth for his sixth 20-homer season.

**Giants 5, Padres 3 (12):** Gorkys Hernandez hit a go-ahead home run leading off the 12th inning and visiting San Francisco gave free-falling San Diego its sixth straight loss.

The Padres had runners on first and third with one out in the 11th and failed to score. Instead, they dropped to 2-8 since the All-Star break and lost for the 13th time in 15 games. San Diego is 5-19 in July.



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MLB

# GM: Harper 'not going anywhere' Cabrera focused on recovery

BY CHELSEA JONES  
The Washington Post

As rumors popped up that superstar Bryce Harper might be headed here or there in a deadline day deal, Nationals general manager Mike Rizzo reached out to The Post with a simple message: "Bryce is not going anywhere. I believe in this team."



Harper

As of late Monday night, the Nationals had not ruled out dealing Bryce Harper before Tuesday's 4 p.m. nonwaiver trade deadline, according to people familiar with their plans. The organization has also fielded calls and gauged interest in high-priced relievers such as Kelvin Herrera and Shawn Kelley, while continuing to pursue Miami Marlins catcher J.T. Realmuto.

A complete sell-off does not seem to be in the works. Even a Harper trade would not necessarily have been a part of one, particularly if it netted the Nationals a piece to entice

the Marlins to part with Realmuto. According to people familiar with the talks between those teams, the Nationals upgraded their offer for Realmuto this week and Miami rejected it anyway.

The Nationals were in touch with multiple teams on Harper. One team that spoke to them last night said they had multiple deals in the works for multiple players, including Harper. That team got the sense the Nationals got cold feet late last night, and that they would not consummate those deals. Rizzo always said they would have to be blown away, and apparently they were not.

Other people close to the team suggested the Nationals spoke to at least two teams about Harper on Monday, both of them in the American League. The Nationals would almost certainly want someone to relieve them of the remainder of Harper's \$21.63 million salary for 2018. People around the team have speculated they would ask an exorbitant return from any team that might have interest in the six-time all-star.

Early speculation suggested big-market teams such as the New York Yankees and Los Angeles Dodgers could have the most interest

in the free-agent-to-be. But the Houston Astros and Oakland Athletics could also fit as teams that need an outfielder and could pick up the rest of Harper's salary.

By trading Harper now, the Nationals would have a) guaranteed a handpicked return for a player who could leave in free agency and yield only a draft pick if he does, b) freed up a place in the outfield for top prospect Victor Robles, giving the Nationals a dynamic outfield rotation of Robles, Juan Soto, Michael A. Taylor and Adam Eaton, and c) relieved that ever-present cloud of speculation about where Harper will go after this season and why he has been treated somewhat differently here over the years. Harper has always qualified as polarizing, and comments like the one he made Saturday night — when he said the Nationals would not have lost had Realmuto been on their side — alienate teammates who take silent notice.

No one seems sure what Harper might earn in free agency after struggling to hit above .215 this season while his strikeout rates jumped to their highest point since 2014. But most people believe Harper will ask for at least something near the \$325 million Giancarlo Stanton got from the Marlins.

BY NOAH TRISTER  
Associated Press

DETROIT — Miguel Cabrera can now say it with a good deal of certainty: Baseball is harder than it looks on TV.

"It's so easy when you watch the game on TV. It's so slow," the Detroit slugger said. "The game is so simple on TV."

It's not nearly as simple on the field, of course, and right now all Cabrera can do is watch. The Tigers lost their star first baseman in the middle of June to a ruptured biceps tendon, and he's out for the season. Detroit was in a rebuilding mode anyway, but losing one of the team's top hitters was a significant blow.

Cabrera was back at Comerica Park on Monday night to host an event supporting children's health and youth baseball programs. He seemed to be feeling good, but he has a long way to go before playing again.

"Right now it's a little slow," Cabrera said. "Hopefully in a couple weeks I starting do more stuff, to be healthy again."

Cabrera said he goes back and forth between Michigan and Florida, and he thinks he's making good progress toward being ready for spring training next year. The two-time American League MVP is 35 now, and this was supposed to be a crucial year for the veteran to show if he could still be one of the game's most feared hitters after a poor showing in 2017.

Instead, Cabrera has played only 38 games after never playing fewer than 119 in his previous decade with the Tigers.

"Really hard, watch the games on TV. It's really hard not to be on the field with my teammates. It doesn't matter if we win or lose. I want to be part of this process," Cabrera said.

Cabrera's big contract extends through at least 2023, which means Detroit may have a hard time trading him as part of its rebuild. In 2016, he hit .316 with 38 home runs and 108 RBIs — his eighth straight year finishing in the AL's top seven in batting average.

Then last season, he hit .249 with only 16 home runs and an unsightly .399 slugging percentage.

There were some decent signs early this year. Cabrera hit .299 with a .395 slugging percentage. But he had only three home runs. He was hitting .323 when he went on the disabled list in early May with a hamstring strain. He came back June 1, but his bat was quiet from then until his season-ending injury June 12.

Cabrera's absence has left a big hole in the lineup, and Detroit's backup catcher John Hicks playing first base quite a bit in his place.

Only six players have reached both 500 home runs and 3,000 hits, and with 465 homers and 2,676 hits, Cabrera still has a good chance to join that group if he can play several more seasons.

## Trade roundup

# Osuna, Giles traded on eve of deadline

Associated Press

Closters Roberto Osuna and Ken Giles switched spots. Adam Warren and Zach Duke moved into the Seattle bullpen. Lance Lynn got a new look in pinstripes. Adam Duvall will be slugging for the Braves. And Ian Kinsler is primed for a playoff run with his new team, the Red Sox.

A day before the deadline to make trades without waivers, there were plenty of deals Monday.

Hoping they could improve their bullpen without causing friction in the clubhouse, the defending World Series champion Houston Astros acquired Osuna from the Toronto Blue Jays for Ken Giles and two pitching prospects.

On Tuesday, the St. Louis Cardinals traded outfielder Tommy Pham to the Tampa Bay Rays for three minor league players, outfielder Justin Williams, left-handed pitcher Genesis Cabrera and right-handed pitcher Roel Ramirez.

The Rays also received international cap space in the four-player trade.

The 23-year-old Osuna was a first-time All-Star last season, his second as the Blue Jays' full-time closer, and finished in May with a 3.38 ERA.

But he hasn't pitched in the majors since May 6 because he's been serving a 75-day suspension under Major League Baseball's domestic violence policy. That suspension ends Sunday.

Osuna was charged in May with one count of assault in Toronto, a charge that remains pending. The Astros have a zero-tolerance policy on domestic violence and released former prospect Dany Vazquez in March after video leaked of him hitting his girlfriend. Houston pitchers Justin Verlander and Lance McCullers



Jim Mone/AP

**The Blue Jays traded pitcher Roberto Osuna to the Astros on Monday for Ken Giles and a pair of pitching prospects. Osuna is eligible to pitch in the major leagues starting Sunday after a 75-game suspension under MLB's domestic violence policy.**

Jr. used social media to voice their disgust about Vazquez's actions after the video became public.

Astros general manager Jeff Luhnow said he reached out to several players and coaches before making the deal, and he clarified that the team policy does not apply to conduct that occurred when a player wasn't in the Houston organization.

"Quite frankly, I believe you can have a zero-tolerance policy and also have an opportunity to give people second chances when they have made mistakes in the past, in other organizations," Luhnow said. "That's kind of how we put those two things together."

Houston's closest competitors

in the AL West, the Mariners, also added to their relief corps. They got Duke from the Minnesota Twins for a pair of minor leaguers and acquired Warren from the Yankees, also for two minor leaguers.

The 35-year-old Duke was 3-4 with a 3.62 ERA in 45 appearances for the Twins. The lefty has limited left-handed batters to a 2.37 average this season.

The 30-year-old Warren was 0-1 with a 2.70 ERA in 24 appearances for the Yankees in a season interrupted by a lengthy stay on the disabled list because of a strained back. He is eligible for free agency after the World Series.

New York also made a move to

replace Warren, acquiring Lynn from the Twins for first baseman/outfielder Tyler Austin and right-handed prospect Luis Rijo.

The 31-year-old Lynn made 20 starts for the Twins, going 7-8 with a 5.10 ERA. The righty is likely to become a long reliever with the Yankees.

New York has Luis Severino, Masahiro Tanaka, CC Sabathia, Sonny Gray and newly acquired J.A. Happ in its rotation, although Lynn could fill in if a starter is sidelined by injury.

Late Monday, the Reds dealt Duvall to the Braves, who hope his bat will help them reach the playoffs for the first time in five years. The outfielder topped 30 homers in each of the past two seasons. He hasn't maintained that pace this year, with 15 homers in 105 games and a .205 batting average.

Cincinnati got right-handers Lucas Sims and Matt Wisler and outfielder Preston Tucker.

Boston acquired the 36-year-old Kinsler from the Los Angeles Angels to fill one of the few holes in its deep lineup. The Red Sox have been without star second baseman Dustin Pedroia for most of the season. Kinsler has been to the postseason three times with Texas and once with Detroit and could easily be playoff-bound again with Boston, which has the majors' best record.

The Angels, who are hovering around .500 and fourth in the AL West, sent cash to Boston along with Kinsler in exchange for Triple-A pitchers Ty Buttrey and Williams Jerez.

Badly needing outfield help, the Cleveland Indians acquired center fielder Leonys Martin from the Detroit Tigers on Tuesday.

Cleveland also got right-hander Kyle Dooly in exchange for shortstop prospect Willi Castro.



## MLB/SPORTS BRIEFS



Braves pitcher Sean Newcomb watches from the dugout during the first inning Monday against the Miami Marlins in Atlanta.

## Users didn't seek out players' tweets

By ERRIN HAINES WHEAK  
Associated Press

A pair of Twitter users whose posts exposing offensive tweets by baseball players went viral over the weekend say to give fans a fuller picture of who they're cheering for, and to expose the sport's "toxic" culture.

In exclusive interviews with The Associated Press, both users said they weren't looking for the years-old tweets from Milwaukee Brewers reliever Josh Hader or Atlanta Braves pitcher Sean Newcomb, but when the posts came across their timelines, they felt obligated to share them.

Kevin Jenkins wasn't looking through Hader's Twitter feed as he watched the All-Star Game earlier this month. But then they began popping up in his Twitter feed. After seeing the pitcher's racist, sexist and homophobic remarks, it was hard for Jenkins to remain a fan.

"Before the tweets, I thought he was a cool guy," Jenkins said via direct message on Twitter. "An amazing pitcher and an even better person ... After the tweets, I mean ... It's hard to defend the guy. My opinion has definitely changed."

Jenkins compiled screenshots of a handful of Hader's offensive tweets and created a post. That tweet has garnered nearly 6,000 likes. He said his intent wasn't to dig up Hader's past to bring him down.

"I still feel that he's an amazing pitcher, but the things he said were inexcusable," Jenkins said. "None of us know if he's really changed since then. I felt it was important for people to see the tweets and make their own judgment."

After Hader's tweets came to light, the reliever was swift to apologize, saying the posts were a youthful mistake, written in 2011 and 2012, when he was a 17-year-old and long before he was a major leaguer. For Jenkins, who is 16 and white, the explanation didn't fly.

"I'm younger than he was at the time, and no one would ever see anything like that from me," Jenkins said. "It's horrid."

Over the weekend, old, offensive

tweets from Newcomb and Washington Nationals shortstop Trea Turner also resurfaced. Twitter user @NatsSquid posted about Newcomb after seeing one of the tweets on his timeline and did a search to see if there were others.

"Baseball culture is toxic and I want players to be held accountable for what they say," said @NatsSquid, who spoke to The AP via direct message on Twitter and declined to give a reporter his name identifying himself only as "a DC-area male."

"There is deeply rooted racism in baseball as well as homophobia and sexism," he said. "I would like baseball culture to change and be more accepting for everyone."

Despite the rivalry between the Nationals and Braves — currently fighting for position in the National League East — @NatsSquid said his posts were not a form of fan warfare.

"It absolutely had nothing to do (sic) with the Braves," he said. "When I tweeted out Newcomb's tweets, I didn't even remember that he played for the Braves. It wasn't about the game, or the team, it was about him as person. I was also really disappointed in the tweets that came out with Trea Turner and I thought I could expect better from him."

@NatsSquid said he was aware of the Hader controversy when he tweeted about Newcomb. When asked if he thought this weekend's posts were the work of copycats, Jenkins said he hadn't considered it, but doesn't encourage it. "I'm hoping people don't continue to do this to athletes as a way to get attention, because that wasn't my intention at all," Jenkins said.

The act of exposing tweets is recognition that racism is everybody's problem, said University of Hartford sociologist Woody Doane.

"Going to a racist insult is something that white Americans have in their toolkit," Doane said. "As much as we like to say otherwise, I don't think that's something we've gotten rid of. If racism is going to end, white people need to call each other out on it. One of the elements of white privilege is not having to care about racism."

## Briefly

# Classy: James opens school

Associated Press

AKRON, Ohio — LeBron James wore a tailored, slim-fitting, gray designer suit and black-rimmed glasses. He wanted to make a strong impression on the first day of school.

After all, it's his school.

Hoping to inspire and provide support to kids facing the same problems he experienced during a rough childhood, James officially opened the I Promise School, a cutting-edge center built in a partnership with the NBA star's family foundation and Akron City Schools.

"I know exactly what these 240 kids are going through," he said, referring to the third- and fourth-graders who comprise the school's first classes. "I know the ups the downs. I know everything they dream about. I know all the nightmares they have, because I've been there."

Long before he became a globally celebrated sports celebrity and three-time champion, James was a lost little boy growing up without a father and wondering where his life was headed. He and his mom, Gloria, struggled for years. There was little money and less structure.

His past is shaping the future for others.

James has modeled the school, and so many other education initiatives started by Michele Campbell, executive director of The LeBron James Family Foundation, to combat the obstacles he faced. He's giving at-risk children, some with learning disabilities and others from broken homes, opportunities they couldn't have imagined, including food and other amenities.

The I Promise School's curriculum is centered around the foundation's "We Are Family" philosophy, an encompassing approach that allows for student growth and family development. The school follows a non-tradi-

tional schedule with year-round programming and days that begin at 9 a.m. and end at 5 p.m.

## Anthony waived by Hawks, now free agent

ATLANTA — The Atlanta Hawks have waived Carmelo Anthony, making official the move that was expected when the 10-time All-Star was traded from Oklahoma City this month.

The 34-year-old Anthony may now sign with another team as a free agent. He averaged 16.2 points with Oklahoma City this season.

The Hawks acquired Anthony, a protected 2022 first-round draft pick from Oklahoma City and Justin Anderson from the Philadelphia 76ers in the three-team trade July 19.

## Wade uncertain about another season

MIAMI — Dwyane Wade's future remains a mystery.

The Miami Heat guard wouldn't say Monday if he has decided whether to play this season, which would be his 16th in the NBA. His future has been the source of much speculation for several weeks, with retirement a possibility.

"In due time," Wade said. "Time will tell."

Wade briefly addressed the issue while on a call promoting his role as an ambassador for the upcoming Jr. NBA World Championship that starts Aug. 7 in Orlando, Fla.

Heat President Pat Riley said last week the team will be patient while awaiting Wade's decision, with the hope of an answer by mid-August.

## Panthers CB Cockrell needs surgery on leg

SPARTANBURG, S.C. — Pan-

thers cornerback Ross Cockrell broke his left tibia and fibula during practice Monday at the team's training camp at Wofford College.

The team said Cockrell will need surgery, but has not said if he is expected to miss the remainder of the season.

It is the second severe injury in three days for the Panthers, a team that went 11-5 last season and earned a wild-card spot.

Carolina lost starting right tackle Daryl Williams on Saturday to a dislocated patella and torn medial collateral ligament in his right knee. The Panthers have not said if Williams will have surgery or if he will try to recover without it.

Cockrell was injured when he collided with wide receiver Torrey Smith in the end zone while trying to break up a pass.

In other NFL news:

■ Sam Darnold is signed, sealed and back under center.

The New York Jets inked the rookie quarterback to a fully guaranteed four-year, \$30.25 million deal Monday, ending the contract holdout of the NFL's No. 3 overall draft pick.

## Flames Iginla retires after 20 years

CALGARY, Alberta — Jarome Iginla closed his 20-year NHL career in the city where he was the face of the franchise.

The 41-year-old winger made his retirement official Monday in Calgary, where he spent 16 seasons with the Flames.

He's the Flames' all-time leader in goals with 372. The captain for his last decade in Calgary also scored the most points and played the most games.

While a Stanley Cup eluded the likely Hall of Famer during his career, he was a dominant power forward in the NHL.



LeBron James gets a laugh from his mother, Gloria, right, and other officials on Monday at the opening ceremony for the I Promise School in Akron, Ohio. The school is supported by the The LeBron James Family Foundation and is run by the Akron Public Schools.

PHIL LONG/AP

## NFL

# Ease: Elliott stayed out of headlines in offseason

## FROM BACK PAGE

"I am just ready to go out there and prove myself and be the running back I am for this team," Elliott said in his first meeting with reporters at camp. "And go out there and have a good year."

The suspension wasn't the only thing that had Elliott in the headlines last year.

There was video of him pulling down a woman's shirt during a St. Patrick's Day parade in Dallas. The NFL cited that incident in its letter detailing his punishment while saying it didn't play a role in the outcome of a yearlong investigation conducted despite prosecutors in Ohio not pursuing the case. Elliott also was linked to a fight outside a bar not long before the team reported to California last July, although his name didn't appear in the police report detailing the incident.

This offseason came and went without any significant headlines.

"I am being more cautious, more focused on my game," said Elliott, who turned 23 last week. "And focused on having a good year."

After leading the league with 1,631 yards rushing in 2016, Elliott had the best per-game rushing average last season at 98.3 yards. His 2,614 yards through two seasons are the most in franchise history, ahead of NFL all-time rushing leader Emmitt Smith and another Hall of Famer, Tony Dorsett.

The Cowboys aren't making any secret about building their offense around him. Dallas dumped Dez Bryant, the franchise leader in touchdown receptions, in a cost-cutting move in the offseason. They believe the passing game with Prescott is best-suited feeding off Elliott.

That's why the Cowboys were as interested as Elliott was in a quiet offseason for the former Ohio State star.

"It's important for him, it's important for his teammates, it's important — obviously — for our franchise and what people's thoughts are on him," executive vice president of personnel Stephen Jones said. "I think it was huge that he was able to really get his hands around what this is all about — the challenges that are out there. Hopefully it'll continue."

With Bryant and 15-year tight end Jason Witten gone, Elliott mentions leadership every time he talks to reporters now. While acknowledging that vocal leadership doesn't come naturally for him, he's shown some signs in position drills at camp.

"I think he's grown into it pretty well," Brown said. "Obviously he's not a vocal leader. But I think he leads by example. When guys see him finishing the way he finishes and working the way he works, that speaks louder than his voice."

As for Brown's "happy" thoughts about Elliott, the 2016 All-Pro will whoop and holler from time to time while carrying the ball to end zone even after the whistle blows during practice.

"I think he's in good spirits," backup running back Rod Smith said. "I've seen what he went through last year and seeing him to be able to overcome all of that and just to see him now just having to worry about nothing but football, it's a beautiful feeling."

Owner Jerry Jones supported Elliott's legal fight even though it kept the issue lingering over the team when a quicker resolution might have given the Cowboys a better chance at a playoff push late in the season.

"I just think he looks veteran-ish," Jones said Sunday. "I think he looks confident. I think he's getting good hard work in. Fundamental work. He just looks sound to me. I'm glad to see him get that solid work in."



PHOTOS BY GERALD HERBERT/AP

Rookie Tre'Quan Smith is part of the New Orleans Saints' new wide receiving corps.

# New Saints receivers vying for more snaps

BY BRETT MARTEL

Associated Press

METairie, La. — When Saints rookie receiver Tre'Quan Smith picked his jersey number, he had a choice between 10 or 18.

The number 10 held no personal significance to Smith previously, but he knew it meant something to fans in New Orleans.

Brandin Cooks, the Saints' first-round choice in 2014, wore that number until he was traded to New England in 2017. So Smith, never shy about discussing his own high standards, went with that.

"It meant a lot, what he did on the field when he was here," Smith said of Cooks, who had two 1,000-yard seasons in New Orleans and is now with the Los Angeles Rams.

"It just boosts the expectations of like, what I have to do. Because I know the guy who wore it before me, he was a great player. So, I want to be a great player."

The 6-foot-2 Smith is one of two receivers who could grow into significant roles in New Orleans' passing game. The other is Cameron Meredith, a free-agent acquisition who led Chicago in receiving two seasons ago before missing all of last season with a knee injury.

Smith unabashedly endorses the notion that he was one of the steals of last spring's draft when he was selected in the third round — 91st overall — out of Central Florida.

Saints receivers coach Curtis Johnson said the 6-3 Meredith has the ability to give the Saints some of what they lost when the franchise's career receiving leader, Marques Colston, retired after the 2015 season.

"When you talk about red zone and third down, one thing you want to do is you want to have length" on the field, said Johnson, who also was Meredith's position coach in Chicago two seasons ago. "He has the skills to separate in small spaces. For big guys, that's tough."

Johnson said Meredith can play out wide, but is particularly adept at executing "seam" routes down



Cameron Meredith is a free-agent acquisition that led Chicago in receiving two seasons ago before missing all of last season with a knee injury.

the middle of the field as a slot receiver, particularly against smaller defensive backs.

"There's a lot of small DBs in the league, and you love to see him match up with small guys, especially in the slot," Johnson said.

Last season, Michael Thomas and Ted Ginn were the most productive members of New Orleans' receiving group; Thomas had 1,245 yards and five touchdown catches, while Ginn had 787 yards and four TDs receiving.

Both are back. But if Meredith returns to his form of 2016 — 888 yards, four TDs — and Smith develops quickly, quarterback Drew Brees could find it easier to punish defenses for shading coverage toward a particular side of the field, or a particular receiver.



GUS RUELAS/AP

Cowboys running back Ezekiel Elliott, right, and quarterback Dak Prescott fake a handoff during training camp in Oxnard, Calif.

NFL

# Kuechly looks to improve pass rush skills

By STEVE REED  
Associated Press

SPARTANBURG, S.C. — Well, it turns out that maybe Panthers four-time All-Pro middle linebacker Luke Kuechly may have a minor flaw in his game.

Who knew?

The 27-year-old Kuechly, considered one of the best players in the league at his position, said after Sunday's practice his pass rushing ability needs to improve "by leaps and bounds."

And Panthers coach Ron Rivera was quick to agree.

"Yes, he does" need to improve, Rivera said. "Like Cam [Newton] likes to tell you, 'Superman has his Kryptonite.'"

Kuechly has been akin to Superman for the Panthers defense for the past six seasons.

He has 818 tackles and 15 interceptions during that span, and has staked his claim as the most productive middle linebacker ever to play for the Panthers with a realistic chance to go down as one of the NFL's all-time bests along with Ray Lewis, Jack Lambert, Dick Butkus and Mike Singletary.

Rivera has repeatedly said Kuechly is like having a coach on the field with his ability to call out an opponent's play call to teammates before the ball is ever snapped. He's seemingly always at the helm and his mistakes are few and far between.

Getting to the quarterback has rarely been one of Kuechly's strengths.

He has 10½ career sacks, including just one last season. By comparison, Seattle middle linebacker Bobby Wagner — whom Kuechly is often compared to in the NFC — has 15½ sacks during that same span.

He is working with new linebackers coach Steve Russ to improve his explosiveness and ability to penetrate the line of scrimmage, a skillset that could potentially elevate the 2013 NFL Defensive Player of the Year to a whole new level.



CHUCK BURTON/AP

**Carolina Panthers middle linebacker Luke Kuechly runs a drill during training camp in Spartanburg, S.C., on Sunday. Kuechly is considered one of the best linebackers in the league but said his rushing ability needs to improve "by leaps and bounds."**

"Coach Russ has a planned attack for (improving) that and hopefully it will translate into a game," Kuechly said.

Kuechly joked that he has to get better at pressuring the quarterback because his longtime buddy Thomas Davis, the team's outside linebacker, "beats me in that (category) every year — and I have to try to get him back."

This may be Kuechly's year to get the

best of Davis, who will start the season serving a four-game suspension for testing positive for a banned substance.

It's not anything new for Kuechly to target an area to improve. For the past couple of years Kuechly spent extra energy working on his pass coverage skills, an area in which he has shown noticeable improvement.

Of course, the biggest concern for Kuechly will be avoiding another concussion. He has sustained a concussion in each of the past three seasons, causing him to miss 10 games.

The Panthers simply can't afford to lose him.

His speed and ability to chase down ball carriers from sideline to sideline still amazes Rivera, who played linebacker for nine seasons for the Chicago Bears and won a Super Bowl in the 1985 season.

Rivera said he's "seen everything" from Kuechly, but pointed to a play he made last week in practice that caused the coach to pause the game film and replay it in slow motion several times. As Rivera describes it, Kuechly was chasing down a ball carrier to the outside when a blocker stepped in his way to cut him off.

But that didn't keep Kuechly from making the play though.

"The position he was in, he should have been cut off," Rivera said. "But he made a step and the blocker came down with him and he jumped around him and accelerated to the outside and made the play. It's one of those where you just sit there and go, 'Wow.'"

While the focus this summer will be on improving as a pass rusher, Rivera said Kuechly remains a special player.

"He has that kind of ability and I think a big part of it is just how smart he is as a football player," Rivera said.

## McKinnon settling into role as 49ers featured back

By JOSH DUBOW  
Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — Jerick McKinnon had a steep learning curve when he arrived in San Francisco as the highly paid featured back for the 49ers.

After four seasons as mostly a backup in Minnesota, McKinnon was one of San Francisco's big-ticket additions in free agency this offseason and took some time to learn coach Kyle Shanahan's complex new offense.

"When I first got here, I was lost. I was really lost," McKinnon said. "My head was spinning. It's different protections I have to learn, different concepts I have to learn and basically I have to take my whole way of thinking for four years and switch it up to a new one. I guess it's complex when you're new to it, but once you start studying it, you get it. I'm starting to get it."

McKinnon has shown just that early in training camp. He broke a long run around the left side on the team's first 11-on-11 drill of the summer and also has made several catches out of the backfield.

Those skills are why the 49ers gave the career backup a \$30 million, four-year contract this offseason. McKinnon will get paid

\$12 million in 2018. Only Todd Gurley and Saquon Barkley have signed contracts that will pay them more this season, according to spotrac.com.

But McKinnon feels no added pressure because of the high price tag.

"I've had the same mindset I've had since my rookie year, which is coming in and working," he said. "A lot of guys get contracts and some of them get content. For me, it's about staying the same and continuing to work and showing my teammates how I work and what I bring to the table and pushing everybody around me."

McKinnon spent four years in Minnesota after being drafted in the third round in 2014 out of Georgia Southern. He has rushed for 1,918 yards with an average of 4.0 yards per carry, has 142 catches for 984 yards, and has scored 12 touchdowns.

McKinnon has his most productive season last year, when he ran for a career-high 570 yards while setting personal bests with 51 catches for 421 yards.

McKinnon replaces Carlos Hyde, who left as a free agent for Cleveland.

McKinnon has more speed and is a better receiving threat than Hyde and should fit well into Shanahan's offense. But Shanahan said McKinnon's strengths start as a runner.

"You have to be a good running back to truly get the effects of being good in the pass game because if you're only good in the pass game, then they can just treat you as a receiver and it's different," he said. "So, it starts with being a running back and we really like him as a running back."

We studied every run he had in Minnesota. I think he fits in the type of runs we do very well. He's got the speed. He's got the cutting ability and he's got the toughness to run through arm tackles. Then the pass game is the huge bonus. He is a matchup issue. He's very good in his routes. ... Just versatility-wise, he's going to help us a lot."

Having a running back who is a threat in the passing game is a crucial part of Shanahan's offense. The Niners ranked third in the NFL last year with 113 receptions out of the backfield, up from just 67 the previous year under Chip Kelly.

While Hyde had a team-high 59 catches last season, he wasn't particularly productive. He averaged just 5.9 yards on those catches and turned only 28.8 percent of them into first downs.

Those numbers are significantly below McKinnon's 8.3 yards per catch and 39.2 percent first downs as his skills make him a better option in the passing game.



Ben Margot/AP

**San Francisco 49ers running back Jerick McKinnon runs with the ball during practice last Thursday. McKinnon has more speed and is a better receiving threat than last year's starter, Carlos Hyde.**

"Jerick is a unique talent," quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo said. "He can do things out of the

backfield. You can line him up in the slot. ... He can do so many different things that it's hard for a defense. What do you put on him? A linebacker, a safety, a corner? It's a pick your poison type of thing so it makes my job a whole lot easier."



## SPORTS



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NFL

## AT EASE

Cowboys' Elliott more relaxed without drama

By SCHUYLER DIXON  
Associated Press

OXNARD, Calif.

**E**zekiel Elliott never has offered much about his state of mind at training camp a year ago when the star running back of the Dallas Cowboys faced the possibility of a suspension over domestic violence allegations.

So let his position coach explain the difference now that the drama is gone.

"You go at this time last year, he's very stressed out," running backs coach Gary Brown said. "Wasn't himself. Looked big. Now he looks happy and jubilant and lean and just going out there and having some fun. So it's a completely different Zeke than it was last year."

The six-game suspension was announced while the Cowboys were in California last year. Elliott's legal team sued after the club returned to Texas, sparking a two-month court fight that finally ended with the 2016 NFL rushing leader serving the ban halfway through the season.

Elliott had an uneven start last year before looking more like the rookie sensation who helped lead the Cowboys to an NFC-best 13 wins alongside quarterback Dak Prescott, the NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year on that playoff team. Then Elliott ran out of legal options, the Cowboys lost three straight games and Dallas ultimately missed the postseason at 9-7.

There isn't any waiting and wondering now.

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Dallas Cowboys running back Ezekiel Elliott is much more at ease at training camp this year. At this time last year, a potential suspension for domestic violence loomed.

Gus Ruelas/AP

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